Dominus Vobiscum

Francis Kelly

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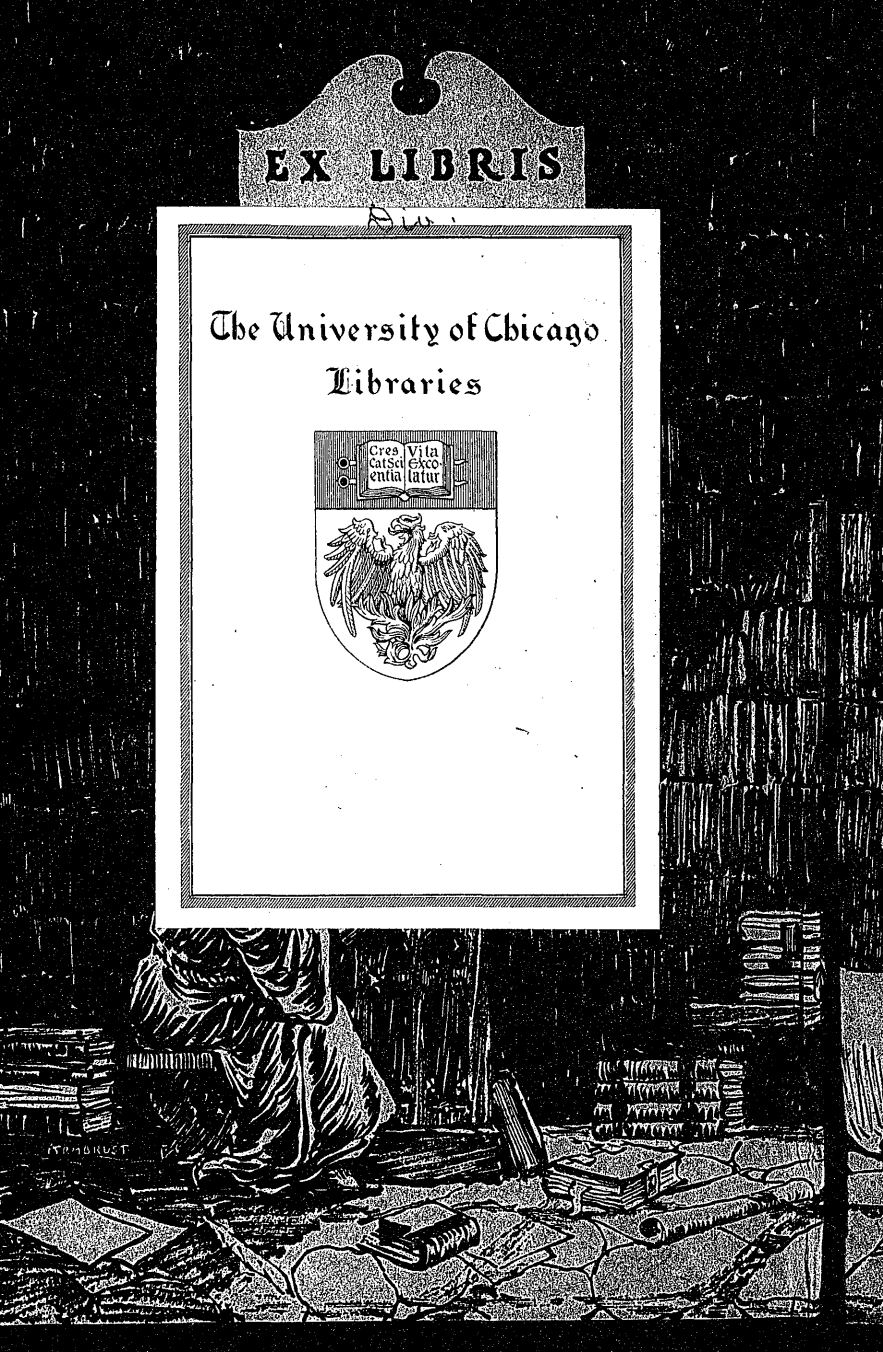

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Dominus Vobiscum

A book of letters.....

Books by

Monsignor Kelley

Protonotary Apostolic to His Holiness; Honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Chapters of Mexico City, Guadalajara and Morelia.

"Letters to Jack"
"The City and The World"
"Charred Wood"
etc.

Dominus Vobiscum

A Book of Letters

By

THE RIGHT REV. FRANCIS C. KELLEY, D.D., LL.D.

With a Preface by the Right Rev. F. A. Purcell, D. D., Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, and Rector of the Quigley Preparatory Seminary of Chicago.

1922

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Archbishop of Chicago

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO

THE FORTY-THREE PIONEERS

OF

THE SEMINARY OF OUR-LADY-OF-THE-LAKE

Mundelein — AREA, ILLINOIS

INTO WHOSE HANDS HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED THE FIRST EXPRESSION OF ITS FUTURE STUDENT TRADITIONS; WITH THE HOPE THAT THESE PIONEERS MAY DO THEIR WORK SO WELL, AND LAY THE FOUNDATIONS SO STRONGLY, THAT THEIR SUCCESSORS SHALL BLESS THEM; LONG REMEMBERING THEM IN PRAYER AND LABOR FOR GOD; WHILE NOT FORGETTING THE SOUL OF THEIR FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE

It is a common complaint of the Superiors of our Seminaries that they do not receive sufficient co-operation from the pastors of souls to whose surveillance the young Seminarian is entrusted during the greater part of his preparatory course and in the long summer vacation.

Unless the good, zealous pastor—and he is the rule—takes an active interest in the young cleric freed from the restraint of the Seminary, and sees that he keeps up the practice of daily Mass, Communion and Visits, much of the Seminary training is nullified.

The chief pastors of our flock here in the United States, aware of the withering effects of this vacation atmosphere, are trying to obviate this difficulty by providing villas for Seminarians during the summer months, where the discipline of the Seminary is continued in a somewhat milder form and an opportunity is given the student of catching up the loose ends that may have escaped him in his year's work.

Where such a system prevails the conditions are ideal and the lack of vigilance on the part of pastors, whose responsibilities have been removed, is not felt by the authorities of the Seminary.

In dioceses where the villa system is unknown, the obligation to keep in touch with the young levite dur-

ing his absence from the Seminary rests heavily upon the pastor. The majority, we believe, realize this obligation, however careless some may be in living up to it.

It is therefore refreshing and comforting to make the acquaintance of a pastor, even if only in a book, who not only looks after the Seminarian with earnest solicitude during vacation, but who keeps in touch with him when he is in the Seminary and imparts to him from the storehouse of his experience the sage advice and wholesome counsel which this good pastor gives "his boy" in letters that might well excite the envy of every Superior of a Seminary. They say in a much more fascinating way the things we are trying continually to make our students understand, and the advice is couched in a familiar tone that could not be resorted to by Superiors when they are imparting instruction and giving counsel. They are more in the line of the confessor and director, when the individual is given a heart to heart talk. For this reason this book should be in the hands of every Rector of Seminarians; it should be read to the student body and given to the Seminarian to be covered more carefully and studied, for it is rich in information as well as a text book of the sound principles of priestly virtues and decorum that every boy studying for the priesthood should make his own and begin at once to practice.

The age of the "brick and mortar priest" has passed, especially in the big centers in this country. Our Catholic people are rising rapidly in the social scale, and their children are receiving the advantages of

higher education. Our priests, to be their representative leaders, must be cultured. They must be so well trained in mind and manner that our people will be proud of them. Not only must they know how to conduct themselves with gentlemanly bearing, and with such a constant regard for their dignity as will ever deter them from stooping to things vulgar and commonplace, but they must be polished in manners and acquainted with all the canons of good taste, so that they will be an ornament to any gathering. This is well brought out in the chapter on the Priest Gentleman. While they need not be acquainted with the "Six Best Sellers," they should be well versed in the best literature, at least of their mother tongue, and should be abreast of the times in all the local and national questions of moment, religious, social and political.

The priest must be a good conversationalist. To be a good conversationalist he must have something worth while to talk about. Religion, history, science, literature and art provide vast fields in which his mind may ruminate and gather a fund of information that will enable him to enter intelligently into any conversation in the most cultured gatherings.

If a priest is deficient in the things that people of general culture are versed in, he is stamped by them at once as mediocre, and a priest can never afford to be considered mediocre. The priest must be a leader in the intellectual and moral world and to creditably fill

that office he must be a churchman of the highest type, possessed, in an eminent degree, of all the virtues of his sublime calling.

To make "his boy" such a leader in his calling is the aim of the author of these letters, and he has covered the field comprehensively. Fortunate the youth into whose hands this book falls.

F. A. PURCELL.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Yesterday your invitation came.....

CHAPTER THE FIRST

ON AVOIDING THE BLAME MENTIONED BY ST. PAUL

My dear boy:

Yesterday your invitation came, and it filled me with happiness, as you may well have guessed. Indeed, I feel that you understood and, in consequence, had an extra thrill of joy in the knowledge of what that little card would do for me, your old pastor and friend. God bless my soul! Was not mine the hand that poured the water of Baptism on your head; that placed our Eucharistic Lord for the first time upon your tongue? Was it not I who helped to plant His Holy Truth in your heart, and who so proudly read your name to the Bishop when you were confirmed? Did you not come first to me with your timid avowal that the altar seemed to be calling you? How shamefaced you looked that day! You seemed guilty of entertaining ambitions above your deserts; and to think that the only answer to be expected was either a rebuke for your boldness or a laugh at your conceit. But you were brave, and out came the truth. Bless you, I had been longing for the avowal. Somehow, I knew that it was coming. I had read the signs years before, and these signs seldom fail one. Then came your college days. I used to drop in at your father's house every month, ostensibly to hear the good man's views

on all things mundane, but really to have your mother slip your monthly report card into my hand, and hear her say: "The little lad seems to be a credit to Your Reverence." A credit to me? Think of that, my dear boy, a credit to me! Never once did she seem to think that, if there was any credit under God, it belonged to herself. The Lord help us, when shall we ever understand the proud humility of a Christian mother?

She has had her card, too, this morning, and I'll wager every neighbor has seen it by this time. To-night she'll be writing you a long letter. When you get it, don't mind about the words that are in it. They will be few enough for your heart; but try to read every thought back of the words, the things she may not be able to put down on the paper. When I see the light in her eyes as she speaks of you I get angry at human limitations, at the horrible walls of flesh that keep prisoners the greatest and holiest thoughts, letting only the echo of them steal over the parapet. I shall not be able to stay home tonight, for I shall want to see her struggle to keep from showing too much joy; and to know the glory of the marching army of benedictions that will be passing through her soul.

So you are to be a sub-deacon next Sunday. You are going to take the solemn step that leaves the world behind, and faces you to the Holy of Holies. At noon Sunday I shall be sure of my long-prayed-for offering to the new tribe of Levi. In less than a year you will no more be my spiritual son, but my brother, "a priest according to the order of Melchisedech"; perhaps to come some day and share my happy burden; perhaps

even to rise above me and be my Bishop; perhaps to close my eyes for the long sleep. It may be you who yet will array me for the last time in the chasuble of our common priesthood, and clasp my dead hands for the Forever, as if over the chalice of salvation. Who knows, my boy, who knows?

I feel now that I may try to put down on paper some things I have already written to you a thousand times in thought; for I have often thought of you, and often prayed over you. Each thought and prayer brought out something I wanted to tell you but could not just then. But I may tell you now. I do not think it will be hard, for my heart will guide my pen; and the thoughts have long awaited this hour. I must do it at this time, for in another year you will be a "Father" too; and what can one father say to another that is not cold and calculating? But can anything be cold and calculating that a father, even if only a spiritual one, says to a dearly loved son? While you may not have suspected it, you were dearly loved, my boy. I did hear you in "the acceptable time." I desire nothing more now than that I may help you as you put your timid foot on the way that leads to a long and I hope happy sacerdotal life. Yes, yes, I said "happy." Even the sorrows of the true priest are joys more truly than the tears of the sinners which give pleasure to the angels of God. During the coming year, therefore, you will have many letters from your old pastor. This is the first of them. They may be poor in form, and sadly lacking the unction of the discourses of your

present edifying directors, but they will come out of the very soul of a pastor, embellished, if not by the pretty flowers of literature, at least by the rough and tough perennials of a fairly long and hard experience.

Will you now turn to your New Testament and, from the second of St. Paul's wonderful Epistles to the Corinthians, read: "Giving no offense to anyone, that our ministry may not be blamed." Read the words over and over again, slowly so as to pronounce each word aloud: "That our ministry may not be blamed."

There is only one reason, my dear boy, why our ministry has ever been blamed. You may think it is because human nature is perverse, and the spirit of evil always working against us. True enough, but does not that let us priests off a little too easy? What power has that perversity and that spirit of evil before the grace of God, of which we priests are so largely the dispensers in the Sacraments that pass through our hands? If you plant good seeds of corn in good ground they will grow; but how can you blame the weeds that stunt such growth, if you are the husbandman and you neglect them? Begin now the custom of thinking little of human perversity and the spirit of evil in connection with the laxity and sin of the world, and much of your own possible share of responsibility for both. To begin your priestly life well, blame yourself early, and do not be afraid to blame yourself too much. As a matter of fact, my dear boy, you will never blame yourself half as much, no, nor one hundredth part as much, as you really will deserve to be blamed. If all the sins of carelessness, of omission, of thought-

lessness, alas, even of sloth, with which priests deserve to reproach themselves, were suddenly brought up to face them, there would be a dead silence about "the perversity of human nature" and "the spirit of evil," in every presbytery of the world. Do you think I am making this too strong? If I am, I am doing so deliberately, and weighing every word in setting down this accusation against myself—God help me! There is more fruitful material for meditation in the Apostle's self-accusation of his being "an unprofitable servant" than you could find in twenty volumes written on the perversity of human nature, and the power of the spirit of evil over men. I do not intend to minimize the strength of either one or the other of these causes for laxity and sin; yet I am not magnifying the charges against myself to the slightest degree. St. Paul would not have urged priests to "present ourselves as ministers of God" under all circumstances, had he not known that the advice would prove a needed one.

But how is it possible, you may ask, to always avoid giving "offense . . . . that our ministry may not be blamed"? I do not say that it is always possible, at all times, to avoid giving offense, but St. Paul seemed to think that we may, if we will, go very far in the kindness, the thoughtfulness, the consideration for our ministry, that insures the success of our work. He wants us to make the effort: "In much patience, in tribulations, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Spirit, in charity unfeigned, in the

word of truth, in the power of God." I think you will find little to add to that catalogue of opportunity, little chance to find an excuse for giving "offense," little hope to escape future reproaches against yourself. But if you are ever tempted to try to find even that little, read on: "By the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report." What is left to us? There is no door through which we may smuggle the tiniest solace for an angry priestly heart. The Apostle to the Gentiles has closed them all.

My dear boy, I am warning you one long year in advance. Cultivate all the sweetness God has planted in your heart. Stir up all the suavity with which He has endowed your soul. Learn how to smile with your eyes as well as your lips, and deep down in your heart always and at all times. "Put a guard on your tongue" that will stop it until you have had time to think. You never knew any other pastor but myself, so naturally you may try to imitate me. Do not, for God's sake, imitate me in my moments of forgetfulness. If you ever saw me angry, as you love me, forget it now. If you ever heard me scold, let the memory of that be as if it had not been. If you ever saw me unkind, in mercy to yourself—*I* do not deserve any—let the eyes of your memory no longer look back upon the scene of it. It is the poor old sinner who loves you that pleads to be spared the responsibility of his own bad example. He cares less for your expressions of gratitude for the little he has done for you, than he cares for some assur-

ance that the dross he left with the gold, has, in the crucible of the Seminary, been entirely burned away.

Next Sunday you will enter Holy Orders, but I shall not be there to see the great step, nor to hear you pronounce your vows; but I shall, God permitting, be ascending the steps of the altar here in your home parish. Around me will be gathered your little successors in the service of the Sanctuary. Behind me will be your father and your mother, your brothers and your sisters, your friends of boyhood, the congregation that is going to be so proud of you a year from now. We shall all be praying for you. Our prayers will be that God may give you abundant blessings to make you a good, holy priest. Mine will be more specific. Would you like to know what my special prayer will be? Then listen, for here it is: "O Great High Priest, Who has loved all men, and Who, desiring, did desire to bring them all to Thy banquet table; Who deprived me, Thy servant, of earthly sons, to give me at least one according to the Spirit, have pity on me this day of my undeserved happiness, and visit not on my boy the mistakes of his father, by letting him think and resolve according to my poor example, rather than according to Thine. Let him see the mild but beautiful light on Thy sweet countenance. Let him hear only the words of kindness that fell from Thy merciful and considerate lips. Let him walk with Thee over Judea, and even up the hill of Calvary, to catch that loving message he shall share the responsibility of carrying to the world. Teach him out of Thine own Heart, whence come only goodness, sweetness and an all embracing

love for Thy poor children of earth; so that he may hate sin but love the sinner, hate error but love the erring. His only hope for happiness is in Thee. I offer him to Thee that he may reflect Thee, Who art love and kindness, Thee, Who art meek and humble of heart. Amen."

That is how your old pastor will pray next Sunday, my dear boy—God love you!

CHAPTER THE SECOND

It pleases me to know....

CHAPTER THE SECOND

ON THE KNOWLEDGE A PRIEST SHOULD HAVE, AND ONE WAY TO GAIN IT

My dear boy:

It pleases me to know that you were a bit disappointed that I did not appear at the Seminary for your promotion. I would have been disappointed myself had I thought I was not missed. I confess that I could have gone without any great inconvenience; and that I decided to stay at home with "malice aforethought." Graceless old scamp that I am, I have not even the suspicion in my head that I ought to ask your pardon. I am sure, however, that I owe you an explanation.

Had I gone to the great ceremony what would have happened? I would have prayed a little when you made the solemn step, and then memories would have come in floods to spoil all my devotion. I would have been seeing you in other days, even as far back as the morning you first served my Mass. The pious, enthusiastic altar boy of old would have kept constantly drawing my mind away from the no less pious, though perhaps more enthusiastic, sub-deacon. An old fellow has his memories, and he lives in them more and more as time whitens, or takes, his hairs. Time has both whitened and taken mine; but, thank God, Time has also deepened the happy memories until, with the slight-

est encouragement, I wander back where the world's light cannot shine, to live the days gone by, all over again.

But I did not want to live with my memories on the day of your advancement to Holy Orders. I wanted to help you. So it was to prayer that I decided to turn, prayer and the Great Sacrifice. On your happy morning I offered Mass for you; yes, and my office, and my thanksgiving, and my meditation. I did better then than dream in the Seminary chapel. All day long I thought of you, and at each thought prayed a little bit more. It was your day, all your day.

You have almost finished your course in a training school of the Church Militant, for that is what the Seminary is. You have served as a non-commissioned officer in minor orders. Now you are a commissioned second lieutenant. In a few months you will advance to a full lieutenancy as a deacon. In a year from now you will be a captain, for then you will be a priest. So this is the time to make ready to take command. This is the time to prepare for it by a more intensive study of the practical science you will need for administration. I am writing these letters to help you. I want to give you the benefit, not, alas! of my few triumphs, but chiefly of my many defeats; for we all learn more in defeat than in victory. Today you may read what I write with toleration. Tomorrow you may smile at it. But when your hairs are whitening and falling, I fear that you will read my little tribute of love with some regrets. God grant that I am a poor prophet about that!

You have a King to serve. You are commissioned to serve Him, for you are to be a priest of the Most High God. He selected you for His service, how long ago neither of us knows. It may be that it was long before creation itself, but no matter. He wanted you. He put His mark on you. He chose you out of the thousands. He gave you of His strength, and He is giving you now of His power. He loves you. He has confidence and trust in you, for He has set you apart to do great things for Him. Fix this thought in your very soul. Face it to every problem that will confront you. It will help you to acquire great confidence. It will make your judgments most careful and most wise. It will lift you up above sordid things, and take out of your human heart the sprout of littleness and the malignant growth of selfishness. You are God's man, sworn to His service, wearing His uniform, speaking for Him, pleading His cause, scattering His gifts, and battling ever for the honor and glory of His Name.

The first secret of priestly success, if a thing so easily known may be called a secret, is that you should know your Leader and love your Leader and Him alone. This is what He meant when He said: "He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." It is the great love that He wants. Father and mother may have all the love you hold for them now, and have it without stint, but the other, the higher love, they may not have. That is God's. Our country places herself before fathers and mothers when she calls her sons for war. God has infinitely greater and truer rights. He wants your whole spiritual being, so that you must

think with Him, will with Him, do as He would have you do, be one with Him in His mystical body, which is His Church.

You cannot love what you do not know. We instruct little ones in the Catechism so that they may know God. How much do we need to instruct officers for the Army of Christ? You may think that you will be fully instructed when you are ordained a priest; but do not forget that no great general was ever made in a military school. Foch was not. He was a student of the science of war all his life before he took command of the Allied and Associated Armies. Hindenburg was taken out of student retirement to perform his masterly achievement at the Mazurian Lakes. The uniformed puppets who failed were always of the kind that graduated but never advanced. It is the same in the Army of Christ. You must think every day about your cause and the means to advance it. You must study. You must be as learned a priest as your talents permit you to be. You must keep on learning until the day you die. Your greatest work may be done in five minutes, the five minutes before you breathe your last.

Now, there are two ways of acquiring the learning that you will need for great success. The first way alone concerns the purpose of this letter. I may take up the second later. The first way is that of meditation.

I am not going to set down the trite old truths about spiritual life so well, and so often, told you in the Seminary. I have a thought to give you about meditation that, while it is as old as the mind of man, yet never seems to have been put down plain enough to suit me.

Meditation constructs your palace of science. You cannot have science, sacred or profane, without a worthy place in which to house it. You will never get more of learning than you can provide for. That is why your Seminary directors have been constantly hammering into you the necessity of meditation; for meditation prepares the mind for housing wisdom. Most of the great castles of the world were built as they were needed. All warehouses were. We add and add till we have a place for all and everything we own. Your Seminary meditations built the first wing of your wisdom warehouse. Your meditations as a priest will continue the building. If you stop your daily meditations when you leave the Seminary, as alas! some do, you are doomed to mediocrity and worse.

You may ask, how can meditation, which is supposed to feed on the things already in the mind, increase learning? Have you ever tried to learn foreign languages? Of course you have, for you speak French rather fluently, and then there is always your Latin. You studied Latin for years in College. You used it in Philosophy and you continue to use it in Theology. But wait a moment. I heard you stammer and stutter over it as badly as I do myself, while there is scarcely a stammer or stutter over your French. But you picked up French only from your companions in a school where it was the language of the house, and never really studied it. Why have you a greater Latin vocabulary yet do not know Latin as a spoken tongue as well as the French you never really studied at all? Because you learned French subconsciously. You exercised it

until you knew it without knowing that you knew it. It is deep down in you by thought and by repetition. Latin was a class language, and as a class language you speak it, with a bit of a halt and a stop for breath, as it were. It is a task to use it, though you do use it. The mind was not prepared for it. You did not meditate it enough. So it does not come out over well-smoothed and deep-cut grooves. It is the same with the science of God. Meditation makes it smooth running and easy, ordered and logical, ready on the tongue and as ready in the heart, spontaneous, instantly equal to the emergency. As French, like English, is a habit with you, so Sacred Science is a habit with the priest who never gives up his meditation.

Do not think, however, that we get nothing new in meditation. Knowledge is not all from without, else why do we know so many fundamental things as it were by instinct? There is still a vast treasury of knowledge of one's self—and therefore of one's Creator—to be gathered by turning the mind back upon itself. More than one saint besides the Curé of Ars said that he learned the things he preached on his prie-dieu. Call it inspiration if you will, and tell me that it comes only to saints; but I say to you that every priest who is faithful to mental prayer is in some degree a saint.

It is all very well for one to talk about meditation in a general sort of way. What shall I say that is practical? Meditation is difficult, as I have good reason to know. What book do I recommend? I do not put very much stress on the book; for I have learned

from experience that the easiest thing to do is the duty we put upon ourselves. It is so, I think, with meditation. We are not obliged to do it. It is not a mortal sin to omit it. Then why not bind it closer to us by the tie of originality? We could all write a book of meditation if we tried. The proof is that we can all preach without stealing. Then why not preach to ourselves? That is one way to meditate. Were I beginning my priestly life all over again, I think I should select one book of meditations to use every day for a month; then every second day for three months; then once a week until I was through with it. Only occasionally after that would I use that book at all. Why? Because a book is good to secure form and method; but a book is only a guide. Masters of the spiritual life agree that when one good fruitful point is secured for meditation, it is just as well, and even better, to let the others in print go. I like that advice, but I think that it would be still better to make our own points. A priest told me that he often imagines himself preaching to a great congregation composed of himself. He visualizes his own head on a multitude of shoulders. He has the great advantage of knowing a lot about his audience, and can make direct hits with every shot. He does not have to mince matters for fear of wounding some, or of wasting exhortations on others. He makes every appeal count. This method gets directly at one's own frailties. In doing that, thoughts of God's goodness, mercy, charity come naturally as a rebuke. This method has the advantage, too, of securing more concentration of thought, avoiding distractions and leading

to something better. Through seeking your own way of doing things, you may, and I hope you will, discover more fruitful plans. The main thing is to put yourself to the test.

But the great aim of meditation is not to preach your shortcomings to yourself—such a method is only a crutch to use until you can walk with surety and confidence—the great aim of meditation is the knowledge of God. I have St. Augustine to bear me out in that statement. "Meditation," he says, "begets knowledge." Out of "knowledge" is "compunction," and out of "compunction, devotion—the perfection of prayer." There is no greater earthly reward. The deeper your knowledge of God, the deeper will be your knowledge of yourself, the deeper your appreciation of your office and rank, the deeper your desire to do your duty well.

How could it be otherwise? The knowledge of the greatness and wisdom of a Commander makes braver and more confident soldiers. You are an officer in the Army of God. By having a deep, living appreciation of His beauty, His glory, His wisdom, His perfection, His omnipotence, His providence and His love, you draw closer to Him. Even in His titles there is material for meditation to last you a lifetime, and you will not even then have passed the cover of the book. They tell you how glorious is your service, how noble is your priesthood, how great is your mission, how wide are your powers, how confident should be your strength. They teach you how to tread safely the path of adulation, as well as how to walk painlessly the way

of sorrow. Over both hard roads you are sure to pass. The knowledge of God gained through humble meditation offers you the best angle from which to judge men; and makes all your judgments of them and their doings instinctive. In emergencies you often have little time to think; but he who is filled with the spirit of God has no room in his soul for falsehood, and the instinctive, the subconscious light, is always there when it is needed.

My boy, you know that I have little of the world's goods to show for my years of service, since I never took advantage of opportunities to amass them. I have no regrets for the loss; but regrets I have, alas many, many regrets, for other losses—barren days without the joy, the comfort, the knowledge that might have been mine at the foot of the Cross, when the darkness was over the face of the earth, but when He was stretching out His arms above me, while His Mother and the Beloved were near to keep vigil with me. Even the dead strode out of the sealed tombs to join the silent school of Eternal Wisdom on Calvary, while men fled away from it, back to the City. The dead were wiser than the living. Do not lay up a stock of regrets. Go to Calvary every day in the darkness and silence. You will find there good company and Outstretched Arms.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

I am a day late with.....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

ON SEEKING APPRECIATION, BUT BEGINNING WITH BISHOPS

My dear boy:

I am a day late with this letter. The blame rests on the Bishop, who sent for me yesterday.

How naturally I wrote those words "the blame rests on the Bishop"! It seems to me that they come without even a thought of their sad significance, every time anything goes wrong. What would I do without a bishop to blame? I wonder if bishops ever realize that, amongst their many usefulnesses, is their utility as scapegoats. If my curate is not doing things as I want them done, I remember that it was the bishop who sent him to me. If the parish is a trouble, it was the bishop who appointed me to it. If the choir is below standard it is because the bishop insisted on following some "unnecessary legislation that he did not have sense enough to see had no application to our peculiar conditions." If the bishop only knew half the things he is made responsible for he would go off to some miserable mission in Africa and die in peace. All blame naturally rests on the bishop.

Yet I must admit that the Bishop, your Bishop as well as mine, is a very charming man, and a very good man. If he were not a bishop I am sure I should like to have him as a neighbor. I find myself warming up

to him when we meet. I have discovered that he has lucid intervals when he is quite right in his judgments, and that these lucid intervals are not always dependent on his getting the benefit of my invaluable advice. He seems to know quite a lot by himself. He speaks well and he writes better. His policy has generally produced good results. He is a pious man, and very faithful to his concept of duty. On the whole he is a satisfactory superior. What, then, is the matter? He is the bishop. That is matter enough.

I never go near the bishop without a feeling of undefined and undefinable uneasiness. I wonder if he is to blame for that, or is it only a bad conscience? I think, in fairness to the bishop, I shall have to admit at least a conscience that is a bit troubled. There are so many things the bishop might refer to caustically, all of which I could explain away, of course, only I do not want the bother of explaining. He might have heard some of the more or less kindly criticisms I am so fond of voicing to my intimates, criticisms that always begin: "I like the bishop; he is a good man, BUT——." No man in the world has ever had so many "buts" hurled at him. His See is called a seat. Constant butting must make it quite often a very uncomfortable one.

I remember when our bishops in America began to leave the Cathedral parish houses and take homes for themselves. There was at once a chorus of criticism leveled at "exclusive bishops." Then one was made bishop who probably had himself joined in these criticisms, for he put forth a statement at once that he

intended living with his Cathedral priests. But that did not save him; for a clerical editor politely inquired if they had been consulted; remarking that, according to his knowledge, the clergy of the Cathedral would prefer a pet goat about the house to the constant presence of their ecclesiastical superior. The editor stated the sober fact. A bishop has a lonesome life, and a lonesome life is a hard one, for we are social beings. A priest's good-by to his circle of friends begins on the day that sees him made a bishop.

I confess, my dear boy, that as the years pass over my white head I do a lot of regretting. Every time I open my Holy Scripture I get a terrific facer from the Sacred Book. Just today this one floored me: "Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned." (Luke vi:37.) Somehow it seems as if the only times I have ever disobeyed that order were when I got talking about bishops. Why could I not have enlarged my charity to cover the very ones who had the greatest claim upon it?

Of course, I am not overlooking the fact that there are imperfections even in the episcopate. Priests think, for example, that bishops have a habit of ignoring merit and of being unappreciative. Perhaps it would be truer to say that bishops forget. They lose sight, sometimes, of the fact that a word of praise goes a long way, and that a bit of judicious appreciation is a powerful factor in drawing the best work out of their clergy. But, after all, such flattery is only a concession to weakness. Why should we ask for it? No one should know better than a priest that there is no power in this world to

reward the zealous and wise pastor of souls. Either he works for God's approval or for man's. If he gets the second he may not deserve the first. And here is the point of this letter, which is not written to talk about bishops, but to warn you against seeking appreciation for yourself. About the very worst you could get in your early priestly life is the popularity that follows keen appreciation of your merits or your works. It is a temptation to pride that has ruined many a good young priest who otherwise started well on his sacerdotal career; for it is a terribly hard thing to stand up under the battery fire of a thousand hosannas.

If you would be a wise priest in your dealings with yourself, which, after all, are your most important sacerdotal relations, neither look for appreciation nor desire it in any form. Never even think about the forgetfulness of the bishop. The best you can do is what is expected of you by God. If a lack of appreciation for your work here worries you, examine your conscience. If it causes you to relax your efforts, hie you to a retreat. You are in danger. So do not expect appreciation. If it comes uninvited try to avoid the consequence of it. Do not complain of its absence, or you might get it. Every bit of praise is a temporal reward that cuts down the spiritual one. The only appreciation you can afford to enjoy is the one you receive from the Great High Priest. The only superior whose reward is worth worrying about is "the Pastor and Bishop of your soul." He knows what you are and what you do. That is plenty and running over.

If I had to live my priestly life over again I should try to get all my consolations out of the things that make most people sad and fearful. First and foremost amongst these things would be the thought of death. What is so dreadful about it if we only come to realize what it truly means? It is just Graduation Day; and are not graduations occasions of joy and gladness? What is there in life that we should want to cling to it? At best it is an exile sweetened by labor. But labor is a punishment. There are men fairly happy in a penitentiary, but how many such would reject liberty if it were offered? A priest is, or ought to be, an intellectual man. But the more intellectual he is, the greater his desire for knowledge. A priest is, or ought to be, a spiritual man. What, then, has he to fear from the kindly hand that ushers us into the land of the spirit? Do you want to see? Death is vision. Do you want to know? Death is knowledge. Do you want love? Death is charity. Why can we not measure death by the rule God gave us, instead of by the rule of the world? There is no sadness for us in the thought of death if we live as we were taught to live. Of course, there is the pain of passing; but I am now growing old in the ministry and I can truthfully say that even this is exaggerated. I have seen too much peace in the faces of the dying to think of death's terrors. The only people who die hard are the people who live hard. If all of life is passed trying to live intensely and to get all the pleasure that it can give, we face death as a terrible disillusionment, for then it is nothing to us but the realization of the fact that we have too often chased

bubbles. No one has a right to that foolish thing popularly called "living one's own life." We have no life of our own. It is God's, not ours. We have no life to live by or for ourselves. The whole universe has claims upon us that we dare not ignore. We have a right to use this life only as a means of reaching life with God. That puts tasks upon us, sometimes very bitter and disagreeable tasks. Why be sad at the idea of separating from them?

You have often said, my dear boy, that your old pastor is a successful man. You think so because you have noted a few little results of his ministry that appeal to the pride of his people. You know that he is not without influence in high places. Alas! my boy, I have tasted much fruit that was nothing but dust and ashes in my mouth. Have the works for which I have been so much praised been mine? Not at all. I wonder now how they grew under my weak hand. I know I was only an instrument, and well I know it. I have come to wonder that God should always take such weaklings as I am, to do what He wants done. My worldly influence produced some very prominent men in the political and commercial world. Can they speak for me, a naked soul, at Judgment? Alas! not a word. There are rulers even in the Church of God who say they owe me something. What can they do for me? They have only added to my responsibility, because of what I did to give them power, for I must answer in part for them; so I have only piled new burdens on my foolish back. My honest ignorance is now a consolation and a hope. Twilight comes, but as the light dims

a new light is rising. I can see with clearer spiritual vision. I know how worthless is praise, how dangerous is flattery, what folly it is to seek appreciation on this earth. Dead sea fruit, dead sea fruit, and I have lived so long knowing that and not understanding what I knew.

Your admiration for me, my dear boy, is nevertheless a great thing, for it shows how well gratitude has developed in you. It shows that there is the precious germ of the virtue of humility in your heart. I accept the flattery—for flattery it is—because of the humility. Guard well that virtue of humility. With it you can build a ladder to Heaven. There is no happiness on earth where humility refuses to dwell. There is only pain and sorrow, sadness and weariness in the house of pride. The incense that the world swings before us is a deadly vapor concealed under a sweet smell.

Keep your ear on the alert to hear from your people. The people know more about their priests than they get credit for; and they are not without the ability to sense the presence of self-effacement, even while admiring energy, and swinging incense to up-to-dateness. The most fastidious of them are quite well able to forget a threadbare coat, if there is a halo barely escaping visibility above the priestly head. Zeal is certainly a great and noble thing in a priest; but the zeal that lavishes itself on brick and mortar, and asks the credit for it in this world, is a zeal quite transparent to the average good Christian. Saving souls is the priest's business; but how can he work at it intelligently if he thinks little of the soul that is his first care, which

must be fed on humble dependence upon God? You cannot "get away" with a pretense of greatness under the cloak of fine financial reports. You may fool your bishop. That is often easy enough to do, for he sees you but seldom; but you cannot fool your flock. They may like you and praise you, but they will secretly lament that you lack something they would be glad to like and praise more.

Take, then, as the object and aim of this letter, the advice that you should look only to God for appreciation and reward, nor must you seek praise or glory from your earthly superiors; keep charity as the chiefest of virtues, remembering that for every criticism there is an added responsibility; do the work under your hand well and faithfully because God gave it to you to do, and men have in it only the small part of expressing His Holy Will regarding you; and hold ever in mind that the end you look to with dread is not the end but the beginning—the day of crowns and graduation—the Commencement.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

It must be thirty years.....

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

ON BEING DIFFERENT

My dear boy:

It must be thirty years since I read a humorous book called "Samantha at Saratoga," and a description in it of the crowd at that famous resort of other days. "Samantha" spoke of seeing a Catholic priest, "who looked for all the world as if he were in the crowd but not of it." I had read that before, but I like to quote it from this book, to show that even a non-Catholic expects to find the priest "different." So he is; so he used to be; and so he ought always to be.

An explanation is due for the remark "so he used to be." Has the priest changed? In externals, at least, I am afraid that he is changing. It is harder to pick him out of the crowd nowadays. I am not referring to the modern habit acquired by some of our youthful brethren, that of changing collars when "going to Saratoga," or anywhere else, on vacation. Just before my day priests did not always wear the Roman collar; and it made little difference, for the sacerdotal mark was on them and could not be hidden by a collar buttoned in front. The young ones can do what the old ones knew they could not do. The mark is less distinct nowadays. We are still in the crowd, but more of it. I do not like that; and, what is more to the point, the crowd does not like it.

Take the matter of dress, and note the difference in the old and the young. When the priests of my day "dressed up," they put on silk hats and broadcloth coats. They dressed to be different. The stamp of the fact that they were not of the crowd was what they wanted. But gone are the silk hats and the broadcloth of yesterday. The silk is now in the shirt, and the dignified coat tails are sacrificed to a fashion born of the hour. The younger generation of priests wants to be in it and of it. They dress to look like everybody else, and almost resent what is left of the priestly habit. Alas! there is nothing of it left but the Roman collar, for even black is often tempered down to a gray mixture, or a disgusting blue. I am not the one objecting to the change of color, the short coat, the silk shirt or the tan shoes. The Council of Baltimore does that for me. I am not arguing to bring back the broadcloth and the silk hat. What I lament is the tendency to look so much like the crowd. God intended his priests to be different. They are a class apart. He called them "A Royal Priesthood" in His inspired Word; and royalty is not the privilege of the crowd. "Is it a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel . . . . hath joined you to Himself, that you should serve Him in the service of the tabernacle, and should stand before the congregation of His people, and should minister to Him?" (Numbers xvi:9.) Now these words referred only to the priests of the Old Dispensation. To those of the New the words of Christ are still more significant: "I will not call you servants. . . . . But I have called you friends." (John xv:15.) Nothing in

these words leads us to think ourselves of the crowd. But what of these others: "Get thee up upon a high mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Sion." (Isaiah XL:9.) Or these: "When he hath let out his own sheep he goeth before them: and the sheep follow him." (John X:4.) Here is the true way to be in the crowd but not of it. We are called to leadership. Leaders are, and must be, different. A shepherd does not dress himself up to resemble the sheep. If he could thus deceive them into thinking him one of themselves, his usefulness and power as a shepherd would be gone.

It may appear a small thing, my dear boy, if I appeal to you not to try for the distinction of being in style, but rather for the distinction of being appropriately out of style. I have not always practised what I preach, 'tis true, but at least I have the good sense to know my failings; so I try to keep a few special admonitions of my own in mind, as follows: Dress neatly; rubber collars are not neat. It costs more to wear a threadbare coat than to buy a new one. Shoe blacking is cheap, and dirty shoes dear at any price. It is only cleanliness to keep your nails manicured, but you do not need finger nails for mirrors. Talcum powder is a medicine for sick skin; as a substitute for a shave it is a delusion and a snare, and spells laziness. Cold water applied daily carries no distrust, but perfume does. It is no sin to smoke; but there is a place where smoking causes no comment, and that place is not on Main Street. Cloves are useful in a boiled ham, both for ornament and flavor; as breath purifiers they are under

suspicion, and rightly so. One advantage in attached cuffs is that they insure spotless linen. The best decorations in a priest's room are shelves full of books; and such decorations are never out of style. One good picture on a wall furnishes it; but flashy chromos are signs of vulgarity. Talking with parishioners about investments is a bad way to collect the arrears of pew rent, or raise the standard of the Sunday offerings. Laymen enjoy playing "an innocent game of cards" with priests; but afterwards they often wonder how it happened that the priests so enjoyed it. Baseball is clean sport, and I like it; but a row of clerical collars decorating the grand stand every day makes people wonder if the care of souls is the principal office of the priest. In spite of the fact that Mr. O'Leary looks pleased when the curate calls him "Jack," he would respect the curate more if he had stuck to the more formal "Mister." It takes genius in a young priest to be familiar with men and keep them from going outside the parish to make their Easter duty. The business of getting money is the business of the crowd; so it does not work in well with the business of those whose duty it is to save the crowd. The Catholic broker who gives tips to clerical friends never holds those friends long, because both learn something they did not know before. There are things legitimate in themselves that nevertheless are "not done" in clerical circles.

The world is very small when we "dive into it for a change." We meet people we know in very unexpected places. Once, at Coney Island in the days of long ago,

I stepped out of a "Shoot-the-Chutes" boat to meet a parishioner who looked as if he were asking himself how I had managed to put a sailor-knot in a new four-in-hand purchased for the occasion. I have never "shot any chutes" since, and if I ever do I shall not be puzzling the acquaintances I meet with my neckties. Please God I know now that I am different; that I ought to be different; that I shall be different whether I want to be or not; that if I ever lose the distinction of being different I shall lose something that I cannot very well afford to sacrifice.

In the wearing of the distinctive clerical dress—your official uniform as an officer of the Army of Christ—naturally you will try to be guided by the regulations of the Church; but you may not be quite successful in that, for you will soon discover that very few priests bother their heads about anything else than custom, and ill-entrenched custom at that. No officer of the Army of the United States would think of appearing in public in an improper or unauthorized uniform. Priests are different. They think it "a sign of humility to avoid display." But the Church has made her rules and regulations at great pains. She evidently did so for good reasons. Not one of them is, therefore, unimportant. Humility may be pushed so far as to fall into the pit of disobedience and vanity. I used to have a biretta ornamented with a fine silk tassel, given me by the Sisters who taught in my school. One day after a ceremony in the chapel of a certain college, I lost my tassel. It was returned by one of the professors, who remarked at the same time: "I ought not give it back

to you, Father William, for you were showing bad example by wearing something unauthorized."

"Good gracious, man," I said, astonished, "this thing is often worn by priests. I never heard that it was unauthorized."

He laughed heartily. "It is nevertheless, Father William, but you need not worry too much. At the ceremony today I saw a bishop, not in his own diocese but nevertheless wearing a mosetta, two domestic prelates with red pompons of the degree above them, fifty priests with lace surplices instead of linen ones; not counting a lot of seminarians with tassels like your own. Why even the Archbishop who sang Mass wore the pectoral cross over his magna cappa in the procession. So don't worry, Father William. One worry will do no good, though your biretta should not be of silk and should carry a black pompon instead of a tassel."

"But we ought to dress properly, at least in the choir," I said. "Why don't you write an article for the *Review* about it?"

"It's past curing in America, that's why," he answered; "and I'm sorry, for there is harmony and beauty even in such small things. Look at these young doctors wearing simars."

"Simars? What's a simar?" I proceeded to show my ignorance.

"A cassock with a cape and double sleeves."

"But I have one, too."

"Yes, but you are probably a permanent rector, which lets you out." (I was not, but discreetly said nothing.) "The simar is not the insignia of a doctor.

The black one is for priests who have a permanent appointment and office."

"You ought to go after Doctor Reilly," I said, "for he is wearing a ring."

"Which in his case," he answered, smilingly, "is quite correct."

There you are, my boy.

It is not only in dress, conduct and surroundings that a priest is supposed to be different. He is a man set apart even as to his education. The crowd is made up of specialists. In fact, the crowd runs more and more to specialties, as life becomes more and more complex; but no one specializes in the fundamental things but the priest. That is why he has such a reputation amongst the learned. They all must go back now and then to fundamentals; and when they do, they find the priest sitting on a projection of the corner-stone. If he were up around the superstructure with the rest he would be as ordinary as the rest; and no one would bother about him. He has something everyone needs some time. Everyone likes to feel that he is taking care of it for them; and that they will find him with it when the hour comes for them to want it badly enough.

Not only is the education of the priest different, but the additions to it must be different as well; not that the priest can afford to ignore secular learning, but that all his seeking for knowledge should tend to the same end, that of knowing and understanding better the infinite science of God. The priest must be a specialist in a very neglected field. He has "to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mys-

tery which hath been hidden from eternity in God." (Eph. iii:8.) If "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge" (Malach. ii:7), it is also written that he shall feed the flock doctrine. "Knowledge and doctrine" are coupled together by the prophet Jeremiah. How, then, can a priest be a specialist in secular science at the expense of the higher learning? No day should pass for a priest without study. In his early years of ministry he should form the habit, for he is no finished product when he leaves the Seminary. In fact, he rarely knows then how crude an article he is. Very few Seminary graduates are an immediate credit to their training; and too many lapse fast into intellectual inertia. Youth does not feel the need of forming habits of study. What would I give now if I had not been a sad example of the folly of such a course! Take an old man's advice, my dear boy, and avoid an old man's regrets.

One of the worst temptations, and one of the hardest to avoid, is to be of the crowd in your social relations. The pleasure shown by your lay friends in having you with them, a "good fellow," is a lure worse than the Will-o'-the-Wisp. Believe me, they do not tell the full truth when they praise you for being one of themselves. They only think they like it. No good Catholic wants his priests to be just like himself. He wants to look up to the priest. He wants the priest to be different. And the priest can be different without being either a boor or an aristocrat; but he cannot be different without feeling different. He cannot put on a difference for a social occasion, as he can a clean collar. He

will appear just what he is; for he learns to be different without knowing. He learns it by being careful about his meditation, his rosary, his office, his thanksgiving after Mass. Particularly and especially he learns it by frequent examination of his conscience. A good and faithful priest does not have to advertise the fact. He cannot hide his light under a bushel. He cannot be ordinary even if he tries. I do not know a single case of a priest who set out to be a social lion at the expense of his piety and his knowledge, and did not end by becoming a social sheep—sometimes of color. A social career for a priest makes him, only too often, an apologetic misfit in the ministry. Instead of showing forth the beauty of his Faith and his vocation in his life, he contracts the habit of chipping at both until they are ready to fall in on him. It is the very unbending of the Church that wins the grudging admiration of her enemies, as well as their uneasiness when face to face with her unshifting adherence to every jot and tittle of her teachings.

Make up your mind, therefore, my dear boy, to be different from the crowd, not to study how to be different, but to be different in all humility as was your Master. Be different because you lead a different life, because you have different responsibilities, different habits, different ideals. Let the crowd come up to you. Do not go down to it. Then your friends will be friends worth while, friends who will love you all the more for the change that you bring into their lives. Live with God that you may know better how to live with men. Live with men only that you may teach

them better how to live with God. Be in the crowd, but never of it. Then you will not naturally seek the crowd for your place. Unless the hints of Holy Scripture have been very sadly misinterpreted by most of us, the spot where the great crowd gathers in the Valley of Josaphat will not be one either of coolness or of comfort.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

Has the news filtered through.....

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

ON THE MODERN SPIRIT

My dear boy:

Has the news filtered through the quiet of the Seminary that the world you are to face in a few months is not the world you left five years ago? There have been many changes because of the war; and the worst of them is only an apparent change. It is really the coming to the surface anew of that old grasping spirit of greed. People say that this is a change, but they are quite mistaken. Once we had the problems of the Great Greed and the Little Greed. Now the latter has been absorbed by the former, and we have the problem of the Great Greed alone.

Because so many think that all this is a change they have coined a new name for a very old social malady. The name is Bolshevism. They think that Bolshevism is a new political and economic theory. Even Bolshevists think so. But it is nothing of the kind. It is the Great Greed entering new places and men. Once it was the sin of the wealthy; now it is the sin of both rich and poor. So the change you are to face is only one of appearance. Deep down the problem is as old as Cain, and as destructive.

As a political theory Bolshevism stands for the rule of the proletariat. It ostensibly aims at reducing to that class all those who are not now of it. But the

Bolshevist really wants two classes—himself and the rest of the world. There's the rub—himself. He provides for an upper class, but restricts it to the favored few. Into the hands of that few he places all power. He protects that power by an elaborate system of groups called soviets. The lowest elects to the one above it. That one does the same for one above it, and so on up to the highest. It is easy then for a minority, or even one strong man, to control downward, while there is all the appearance of control by a majority upward. Thus Bolshevism, as a political theory, is really a recrudescence of absolutism. It was a popular idea in the minds of the civilized of our day that a political system called democracy had supplanted absolutism. We believed that, and thought that the great war had, for all time, done away with absolutism. We said that we fought it for democracy. Perhaps we did. I do not know. But I know that it was not democracy that came out of it. We may have fought to kill absolutism, but the present worry of the world is that we are now threatened with absolutism under a new name, and may get it. Whether we do or not, we may with profit dig deeper down and realize that, while Bolshevism is staged as a theory of government, it is really only a means to an end. The end is the control of wealth and power in the hands of a few. Was there ever a time in the world's history when that battle did not rage? It is still the battle for the few fought by the many. The many now will gain, if they win the victory, just what they have always gained, a change of masters. The net result, as judged a hundred years from now,

will show no particular difference from the net result of the War of the Roses, the Conquest of Gaul by Caesar, or the triumphs of Alexander the Great.

There are, of course, idealists in every movement of this kind. If there were no idealists the real leaders could get nowhere. The idealist is always blind until it is too late for him to open his eyes. He is the second victim of the Great Greed. The first victim is, of course, the people. Besides idealists there are the self-deceived. They think themselves idealists. Temptation comes; there is a quiet glance around, a sudden closing of doors, eyes narrowed for bargaining, and the Great Greed has them. It was always so, and, I fear, it always will be so.

If you throw a stone into a lake, circles of wavelets will at once start for the shores; and, arriving, are sure to reach their every indentation. Even the smallest bay, the mouth of the tiniest rivulet, will feel the influence of the disturbance. It is the same with disturbances in world affairs. The influence of the French Revolution went all over this earth. It is still felt. Bolshevism is another stone of the same kind cast into the waters. From it we must expect the usual and inevitable result. Even the priesthood, protected as it is by sound doctrines and lively faith, must be touched and troubled. We are in the world and we cannot avoid the consequences of being in it. The Great Greed, then, is sure to try to influence us. Our business is to see that it does not succeed.

We priests may expect the first consequences of present-day troubles to appear in the form of a vague un-

easiness about the matter of obedience to lawful ecclesiastical authority; an unformed desire for greater freedom of action; an unvoiced hope that we may not be held too strictly to statutes and canons. What will follow that—unless we check ourselves—will be a letting down of the bars to laxity in priestly detachment from worldly things, demands for greater remuneration for our services with a consequent increase of our comfort and enjoyment: in a word, a longing for the flesh pots. There will follow a loss of respect for us on the part of our people, and a consequent loss of efficiency in our ministry.

Say what you will, it is the autocratic democracy of the Church that, under God, gives her the greatest strength; as it is the autocratic discipline of any army that insures its victories. The Church is democratic in opening the door of advancement to all, rich and poor alike. But once position is attained, the Church becomes autocratic. She is the one institution on earth that has certainty for a foundation. She has no need to grope about and feel her way. She knows the way, for her Founder had trodden it, and on it had left the print of His footsteps. The Church is wise with the wisdom, not only of the years, but of divine guidance and inspiration.

When the splash of a great stone is heard in the waters we are guarding, it is the priest who must first prepare for the waves that are sure to follow. By looking to his own self he looks also to others. He should step back so that the waves will break before touching his feet. His example and counsel will warn others

to do likewise. Thus the Great Greed will not hurt him or his.

Clerical Bolshevism has already had its victims. The Church in Czecho-Slovakia has had to face it and bear the sorrows resulting from it. Do not imagine, then, that the priesthood here is entirely immune. If there is laxity and truckling to the spirit of the day anywhere, the results will show in other places. These results gave us Gallicanism in France. There are even yet some dying ripples of them. In our own day we had the blight of Aglipayism in the Philippine Islands. Even in America we have still with us, though weakening daily, the evils that resulted from the "Independent Church" movement amongst the Poles. Once the top bars of authority are let down there is the dangerous tendency to kick down the others also. It is the top bars of the fence that we should be most careful to guard.

The priests of today are linked to the priests of the past. There are things that time cannot change in us, things that we may modify but never alter. The very vestments we wear tell us this. We wear them, and they never seem old-fashioned upon us. Their antiquity is an added glory to them. True, they have been modified with the passing of the centuries, but we recognize them even as they are today in the pictures of St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Philip Neri. We get closer to both for that. But they are just as easily recognized on St. Patrick and St. Boniface. Even as far back as the Catacombs we trace the vestments of the priests, and note that they seem to typify an unchangeable some-

thing in every century since the days of the Apostles. But the lesson of the vestments takes us farther back. Think of the prayers you say as you put them on for your daily Mass. Each one of them has a very old souvenir to recall, a souvenir of the first Christian Priest, who was that Christ of ours, "meek and lowly of heart."

The spirit of the world has a new message for every decade. The spirit of faith has but one message for all the centuries. We may present it in a new dress, we may apply it to new conditions, but it remains ever the same. It is the top bar to our fence. We dare not, we may not, let it down for a single instant. Make what concessions you will to the times, but there is one concession you may not make. You may be modern enough in other things, but the truth you were ordained to announce is the one eternal and unchangeable thing. It is the old and the new. It belongs to all time, because it belongs to eternity. We may have new methods for announcing it, but the message is still Christ's.

Why has the life of a priest been hedged in with restrictions on his liberty? Why must he, even in old age, be still bound to obedience? For no other reason than to guard that truth, to keep the top rail of the fence always in its place. For no other reason than to insure the Church against the clerical Bolshevist—I might, without injustice, say, against a mad dog infuriated by the heat, biting and poisoning all in his path. Severe? Not at all. Count up and list all the heresiarchs whose exploded theories, like deflated war balloons, lie on the fields where life's battles have been

fought; whose manias for innovation have been more destructive to society than war; whose lives gave birth to scandals now grown into the worst of menaces: and you will find them, almost to the last man, ordained priests who started on their careers of evil as mild types of the clerical Bolshevist.

It is well to think of a few warnings before we begin to worship Spencer, find reason in Haeckel, and bend the knee to the Higher Critics. We have the truth as Christ preached it. If truth once, it is always truth. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the sound words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to that doctrine that is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but sick about questions and strifes of words; from which arise envies, contentions, blasphemies, evil suspicions, conflicts of men corrupted in mind, and who are destitute of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness." (1 Tim. vi:3-5.)

Can you find a better picture of the modern world outside the Church than this one painted by the Apostle of the Gentiles almost two thousand years ago? The pride of the world is its boast. The world glories in its ignorance, for it rejoices not in its knowledge but in its lack of knowledge. What other period has so enthroned the agnostic? Even the secular writers of the day constantly refer to the mental and religious sickness of the times. When was the strife about questions and words greater? What age saw more of envies, blasphemies, suspicions and conflicts than our own? When was society more corrupt since the days of paganism?

A power has been put into the world to save the world. A priesthood has been ordained to protect that power and spread it. The power is the Gospel of Christ. The priesthood is ours. We have a double duty: to ourselves and to our flocks. But we have also a great solace in our labor, that, by doing well our duty to ourselves, we secure the grace to do well our duty to others. To us especially do the words of Scripture apply: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all else shall be added unto you." Right here is the whole secret of success in the priesthood: to be ourselves what we want others to be. I am confident that no holy priest ever was a failure. If you find failures in seemingly holy and pious priests, they are proofs, not against my contention, but against your estimate of what constitutes holiness and piety. There are no angry saints, no ungracious saints, no miserly saints, no cynical saints, no saints without zeal and mercy, no saints without charity of tongue and thought as well as of act. It is true that "by their works you shall know" saints as well as sinners. I have no patience with the excuse for inefficiency we hear now and then, which is too often: "Father So-and-So is a saint. His parish is run down because he prays so much that he has no time for anything else." Christ sent priests into His vineyard to work as well as to pray. Both come in due order and in their own time. The best prayer of a priest is the offering of his labor to God, which is the secret of constant prayer.

The growth of Bolshevism in the world is because so many are averse to labor. Idleness is still the mother

of vice, and has lately become also the mother of destructive political and social theorizing. Clerical Bolshevism cannot grow without clerical laziness as the soil from which it is fed. A busy priest has not time to worry about his lack of comfort, his poverty, or his so-called rights. We are happiest in obedience and in intelligent labor for God. We are strongest in our good example. We are loved because we love much. We are respected for our self-sacrifice. The critical priest gives scandal. The complaining priest undermines his authority and usefulness. The disobedient priest does not even bury his talent in the ground: he utterly destroys it.

My dear boy, if it be true that the world needs the spirit of Christ to give to society its stability, and to men the impulse to higher things; if it be true that loyalty, fidelity and charity are the saving virtues; if it be true that obedience to law is the salvation of society—and who doubts but that all of these are true?—then the obligation of giving example as well as precept is surely on those to whom the Master said: "You are the light of the world." There is then no room in the priesthood for the clerical Bolshevist.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

A priest is set apart from.....

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

ON THE ONE BUSINESS OF A PRIEST'S LIFE

My dear boy:

A priest is set apart from other men for but one purpose: to lead them to salvation. He does that by offering the Holy Sacrifice, by dispensing the Sacraments, by preaching the Gospel, and by going about, like His Divine Master, doing good. He has no other business on earth, once he is ordained, except to bring himself to salvation with his people. All things in a priest's life, therefore, turn around the great purpose of his existence and his calling. The way to be a good priest is to keep that great purpose ever in mind, and to direct all actions so as to minister to it, to carry his priesthood everywhere at all times. But the earth and all who inhabit it, as well as all that is in it, seem part of a plot to make priests forget the great paramount purpose of their lives. It is not easy to be a good priest. Neither is it easy to be a bad one; though, in a worldly sense, it might be considered pleasanter, just as it is easier to sit down and study a book than to go out fishing, but pleasanter to ignore the book and launch out into the deep with rod and line. The pleasant things are often harder to do than the easy ones. Human nature leans to what is pleasant, but human nature has a bad habit of making mistakes. "Whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not: and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure and

delighting itself in the things which I had prepared: and esteemed this my portion to make use of my own labor. And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labors wherein I had labored in vain, I saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." (Eccl. ii:10-11.)

When I was a boy there used to be an annual winter carnival in Montreal. The festivities centered around the great ice palace, a marvel of unique beauty when lighted up and reflecting the torches of thousands of marching men. But there was no beauty in its melting ruins when spring came. Dirty and abandoned, the heap of frozen crystal crumbled and vanished before the rays of the sun. The work of a priest outside the great purpose of his life may appear brilliant to the world and to himself. But wait and see. The Sun of Justice will melt it before his eyes when death comes, and he will know that it was vanity before, and vexation of mind after. Many such a palace of vanity has gone down, yet we do not learn the repeated lesson. We carve our ice pinnacles and gargoyles; we set one frozen block upon another; we ornament our palace with our ambitions and our hopes; we think only of this winter of life, and not of the Eternal Spring that approaches; we light it all with the lamps of our learning, and make it scintillate with the flashes of our marching wit and wisdom; we are acclaimed for a day of carnival, and then—that inexorable Sun, the one Living Thing, the One Eternal Reality. What a picture! Vanishing crowns, dying laurels, melting hopes and ending glories;

a scrap-heap of useless speeches, unprofitable influences, dead political pulls, worthless financial gains, lost opportunities, with, maybe, a dust-grimed and water-soaked purple robe to top the pile of good-for-nothing reproach.

Yes, yes, I know how easily we find excuses and reasons for building that palace when the winter is unkind enough to lend itself to our deception. We go into society thinking to save it; we dabble in politics to clean it; we follow ambitions to turn them to God; we read the wrong books to be the more learned in coping with modern fallacies; we save and invest in order to have more money for good works; we take to pleasant places in order that we may be in better trim to face the unpleasant ones. Fools! The history of our royal sacerdotal line is filled with the lessons that teach us better things. Augustine wrote his warning. Wolsey and Richelieu lived it. Luther carved it on every stone of a modern tower of doctrinal Babel. Yet, "the grass is withered and the flower is fallen; but the word of our Lord endureth forever." (Is. xi:8. Alas! that we do not keep His word in mind always.

Preaching? Of course, I am preaching, but preaching as I already told you out of a mouth that has tasted of the ashes; out of a heart that has known disappointment; out of a mind that has learned its littleness; out of a soul that was once left hungry and thirsty for its food and drink. But I am preaching no message of despair. I am preaching what millions of good priests preached better by lives of self-service and fidelity. Look about you. See the glory of the Church in

America. It was born in the wilderness, by the labor of the pioneer priests of this land. It was offered, a fruitful sacrifice, from the poor maimed fingers of Jogues that could no longer clasp the chalice. It was made certain by the fire that seared the flesh of Breboeuf and Lallement, and by the blood of Goupil. It was woven anew into a seamless robe by the patient endurance of that nameless band of priests who followed the exiled children of the Gael and the Teuton into the hopeful misery of a new continent. There is the Camino Real in California, over which it passed with Junipero Serra. It is the legacy of the Padres, and the golden store of Carroll, Bruté, England and Sorin. Preaching? No. I am only echoing dead voices that spoke a message undying. These spoke in deeds. I have only words to give you. My words are written in the narrow and crowded places. They carry not far. The message of these men was given in the wide expanse of prairie and forest, and the width and breadth of both gave it power and strength. One thing, one thing only, is worth the effort of your priestly life, to save souls, to guard and bring back the lost sheep of Israel. For that you were born. On that, and on that alone, shall you be judged.

The priest, however, is not to be thought so far apart from other men as to have no place amongst them. He belongs with other men in the struggle for life; but his business is different, for it is the business of God and eternity, while others have the business of men and time. If you get this difference firmly fixed in your mind it will make it much easier for you to go about your Father's business and detach yourself from tem-

poral cares. Yours is the business of God. It is greater than the business of emperors and kings. It is more honorable than the business of a judge. It overtops the business of a teacher. Yours is the one work that does not die with the earth. It is eternal, for your priesthood is that of Jesus Christ, Who was sent by the Eternal Father and Who sent you even as He was sent.

There is something absolutely overwhelming in this thought of our one business on earth, and the eternity of the dignity and the office we bear. There is enough of dread in the thought to crush us; but, strange indeed, it is the realization of it all that makes us happier and better priests, as it is the forgetting of it that makes us sad and lax ones. Show me a lax priest, and I will show you one who forgot the greatness of his calling, the business of God and the sublimity of his dignity. The more we lose the thought of being men set apart for the business of God, the more interest we take in the business of man. The more we realize that we are the eternal business men of God, the more closely we become attached to Him and detached from the world.

It is a paradox, but it is true, that the world respects and loves most the priest who hates and despises it most. No priest wins so much love from men as the priest who cares only for the love of God. It is by showing the world that you have no attachment to it, save that of duty, that wins the world for you. A sinner has often the finest perceptions for the discovery of a saint. Is it a God-given instinct of spiritual self-preservation, that last vestige of lost grace? It may be. The lower animals who have not souls have the instinct of

self-preservation, to save their bodies from death. May we not believe, must we not believe, that the "sufficient grace" which is the portion of all, sinners as well as saints, creates some higher instinct of the animal with a soul, to save him from spiritual death? The dog instinctively knows the man who will protect it. The sinner instinctively knows the priest who will save him; and he will seek him away from the mob, away from the turmoil of life and its follies.

Do not, then, think that you need to become a business man of the world to reach business men in the world. To reach all men best you must stay in your own place and never wander out of it. You must attend strictly to God's business. For that no apology is needed. It answers all questions. In it you may claim the same right as Jesus Christ had, to say, "I was about my Father's business."

I am well aware of the fact that all this is not easy to do. We are naturally attracted to the things that are of interest to all men, and the priest is not an angel. It hurts to detach oneself from the things that engage the attention of our fellows. But here I am reminded of a quotation from Fenelon that I ran across a few days ago: "In all the world there are not more poignant sorrows than those that are caused by the happiest marriages." How terribly true! But the priest's marriage to his duty, to God's business, is the strongest and the happiest of all bonds. We must expect then the poignant sorrow of detachment from the pleasant things of life. We must expect to feel the sadness of loneliness. We must taste the exquisite pain of great love. We

must seek the hurt of great sacrifices. There is no escape. We cannot have both the world and God if we are to do our full duty. We cannot save the world for God if we form the habit of thinking that the world is worth something without God. A miner cannot be successful if he is satisfied with the glitter of the quartz, and refuses to crush it to dust that the gold may be extracted from it. It is the gold we seek, and not the rock that contains it. We must crush the glittering world's allurements to dust, that souls may be gained for God's treasure house.

Do you think I am urging you to get away from the strategic positions and hide yourself? By no means. But the place of duty for a priest is always a strategic position. Where he is put by authority is the best place for him. If his life is in the desert, there is work to do even in the desert. There is work for good-will everywhere. Do you ask to be greater than St. Jerome? Yet he was one who sought desert and solitude. You probably will not be sent very far from the crowded places. Very well; the crowded places are your desert. See if you can make it bloom in the gladness of God's love.

Mayhap you are thinking that I take you too seriously; that I over-estimate your possibilities and your gifts. In humility you may be thinking that you are not talented enough to be able to do the things I urge upon you. Good! If you are thinking thus you are fine material for the priesthood. It is in having a holy distrust of ourselves that we arrive at confidence in God. Trust yourself little, but in proportion to your low estimate of yourself trust greatly that God will use your

littleness to do His work. Do not fear your own incapacity if you have done what you could to remove it. Under such circumstances incapacity may be a gift. A vacuum is the emptiest of all things, but what wonders it does in preserving food. Could men ever have discovered the Arctic and the Antarctic had it not been for the vacuum put to useful work inside tins of meat? If a vacuum was a necessity in discovering continents, surely the most incapable of us has a place in the great scheme of salvation. St. Francis of Sales knew that very well. It was his wisdom that said: "A reed in God's hands becomes a pillar of the temple."

The whole success of a priest depends upon his fidelity to the great object of his calling. His fidelity depends on his being in tune with the Will of God. He is safe if he seeks only to do that Will in all things, and somehow, God always makes it known to him. The humble priest makes few mistakes. The proud and self-opinionated one is adding to a long list of them every day he lives. He is the one who thinks it well to be a man of worldly affairs in order to attend better to God's affairs; and therefore he is the one who seeks the applause of the world, to the loss of the favor of God. Dread the occasion when you must be in the noise and light of worldly banquetings. Dread more the flatteries that are part of them. Go to them when you must, armed with dread, and you shall be armored with grace to make them contribute to the purposes of your life. Even in the midst of them you can be a man apart. If you carry your detachment with you wherever you go you carry the best of your priesthood as well.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

You have been called.....

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

ON PREACHING

My dear boy:

You have been called to deaconship, one step nearer the goal. I am happy with you at the approach of the great day. One of the deacon's privileges is that of preaching. It is a great privilege, for "Faith comes by hearing." (Romans x:14.) The work confided by Christ to His Apostles was summed up in His command that they should go into the whole world and preach. Why then all this diffidence among our young men about preaching? Why do they try to avoid it as if it were quite a secondary affair of their ministry? Are they afraid of themselves? It appears that even Moses gave us an example of that kind of fear, but God rebuked him, and, through Him, a great many of us since. "The Lord said to him. . . . Go therefore and I will be thy mouth; and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak." (Exodus iv:12.) The present day diffidence about preaching may partially be excused by the fact that, with our crowded churches on Sunday, one congregation almost tumbling over the other from early morning until noon, there is little time left for good preaching. Then we must find the time. "Preach the word; be instant, in season and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine." (2 Timothy iv:2.) There is little chance then for excuses.

We must preach; and if we cannot do it at one time or season, we must find other times and seasons. We must even make times and seasons. It it not a matter left to our convenience or taste. If there is question of ability or lack of it in preaching, remember that some seed always falls on good ground. Preaching, no matter how bad, is never a complete failure. St. James said: "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (v:19.) Do you see now why I am myself so insistent on preaching even when no one but myself wants me to preach?

Holy Scripture is the best book of instruction on preaching; and the golden key to good preaching is found in St. Paul's words to his beloved Timothy: "Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy ii:15.) Do that and you will not be a failure as a preacher. What are the qualities demanded? Simply these: sincerity, knowledge and zeal.

Sincerity means that we must be "approved unto God." We must prepare by securing that proper foundation. Undoubtedly we do that by coming close to God, by living in Him. True piety has a way of making itself felt, like heat communicating its glow. We cannot be sincere without piety. A sinner can talk, but he cannot preach. He can make people admire what he says, but he cannot touch the heart, for he cannot be sincere. "Do as I say but not as I do" must have originated amongst the fox-hunting clergy of the

old days in England. Well, the people did not do what they said, and Catholic England went down into the muck with its bestial King. Abraham Lincoln put it well for all of us when he remarked: "You cannot fool all the people all the time." The insincere preacher cannot fool any of the people all the time. They know sincerity, the foundation of all good preaching. It is a result of simple piety. Out of it springs glowing faith and intense charity, essentials in the successful preacher of truth.

You cannot be a sincere preacher without loving to preach, even though you may be afraid of yourself. You must appear before the people because you have something to say, not because you have to say something. Sincerity calls for action. It calls for it with increasing strength as Faith grows stronger. For Faith is not like a treasure that can be locked up in a vault. It is a flame that cannot be hidden. If you try to hide it, it will be smothered. Faith urges us to use it for the benefit of others. Christ adds the duty of doing so. Full of sincere faith we must be lovers of the Word. We must ardently desire to preach.

Knowledge implies not only sacred science, but also the cultivation of good and wise methods of communicating it to others. If we have defects we must take care to remove them. If we have a duty to preach we also have a duty to learn how to preach. The best is none too good for the mission we have received. Difficult? Yes, it is difficult. But suppose we passed a whole lifetime trying and never succeeding, and at life's end we preached just one effective sermon, and through

it drew one soul away from sin, would not the effort have been well made? Do not forget about that mission preacher who asked only to save a single soul from committing a single venial sin, as a satisfactory result of his week's labor.

Study hard to be a good preacher. Keep yourself grounded always on Theology and Holy Scripture. Study St. Paul especially. Read extracts from the Fathers. Build up your style and keep your graces of expression by reading the classics of your language. Try to speak English well outside the pulpit, and your tongue will refuse slang when you are in the pulpit. A well trained tongue in touch with a well trained mind works wonders for a preacher. Get the habit of reading every day out of the book of nature. Study bugs and beetles, grass and violets, trees and frogs, flies and elephants, stars and comets, maps and vegetables, men and minerals, oceans and bath tubs, baseball and physics, poetry and brickmaking, statesmen and bolshevists, rulers and the ruins they left behind them. Now you are laughing. Please don't! I am telling you the simple truth. A good preacher must know enough about everything to summon everything to testify for God and truth. You need examples. You must marshal your metaphors and drill your similies. You must advance your soldiers to the trenches, and follow your regiment, in the uniform of religion, to the shock of the battle. To do that well you must develop in you the habit of observation. Enlist your fighters. The soldiers will spring out of their barracks in your brain as soon as you need them. They are a loyal lot, these

recruits you have gathered from your walks in the woods and your delving into books. They are anxious to serve; only you will not have them unless you go out where they live and recruit them.

Zeal is strength. Zeal is fearlessness and force. Zeal is the commander of every situation. Wisdom is its adjutant, prudence its scout, patience its entrenchment, and truth its army. Zeal is the first born of charity. If we love God we shall want to work for Him. Without labor in His cause zeal cannot be satisfied. So it follows that the whole life of a priest should be a life of labor; that the good priest should take advantage of every opportunity placed in his way to win souls; for, as I told you, souls are the gold we are seeking to gain for the treasury of Heaven.

A few practical hints may help you. Preach nothing but the Word of God. Avoid what does not belong to the pulpit. We all made a mistake in the late war by dragging it into the churches. Patriotism does not excuse us for making God's house of peace a rear line battle trench. Stick to the Gospel and your country will receive blessings from the Gospel. That is the best form of patriotism to bring into the Church. I am thinking of no exceptions, whether for America, or Ireland, or France, or Germany, or Poland, or Armenia, or the infant Slovakias, or any other nation. It is quite wrong to urge special conditions. Our Lord, Who gave a command which concerned only His Gospel, mentioned none. Be jealous of everything that takes time from that Gospel you were ordained to announce.

Prepare your sermon, and begin each at least a week

before you have to deliver it. Write it out; you need not, after a few months' experience, commit it to memory. When it is written go over it and divide it up according to the meat that is in it. Learn the divisions and the sub-divisions, and the words will come. Begin all your sermons with some striking or interesting thing. If you have not found such, then begin with a striking arrangement of words. Do not say: "My dear brethren: In the Gospel of today we read this parable." Everybody does that. Begin in your own way, and have a way of your own. You will get no attention out of a trite old introduction. It is just as easy to say: "My friends, Jesus Christ was the world's greatest story-teller. We have His parables to prove it, and today the Gospel gives us one of His best." The good preacher must put old wine into new bottles.

I already told you that the best preparation for preaching is meditation. You may with profit time your meditations to your sermons; but do not make your meditations because you have to preach. Nevertheless the best preacher preaches his meditations without knowing it. If you have to preach on a certain Sunday read over the Epistle and Gospel assigned to it on the Monday before. Then go to a good Commentary and read what a Master had to say about them. On Tuesday morning make a meditation on the Commentary's words. I do not have to tell you to do the same on other days of the week. You will do it without being told. On Thursday jot down your plan. Make this plan a meditation for Saturday. There is nothing

left but to get the divisions fixed in your mind. The certainty of eloquence is security of knowledge.

When you step into the pulpit you ought to have at least two sentences well in hand: the opening and the closing ones. On your opening sentence will depend the audience's attention for the time being. On your closing sentence will depend how long the impression remains with them. Make that closing sentence an epitome of what you want your hearers to remember. Say it so they *will* remember it. Say it so that your listeners may later say: "As Father B. remarked in his sermon last Sunday." Study how to do that. I cannot tell you; for it is your own touch that will count, not mine. Remember that you need attention, sympathy, and retention from your audience. Study how to get all three. Do not preach long sermons. The sermon on the Mount fell from the lips of the Divine Model of preachers. It was short, but it is still remembered. A sermon for a great occasion might run for thirty minutes. No Sunday sermon need go beyond twenty minutes. A sermon in summer or at the early Masses should not exceed ten minutes. You can do good work even in a short space of time if you prepare. If you do not, you cannot do good work in sixty minutes.

When you begin to preach use the simplest words that present themselves. Avoid those that everybody does not know. Preach at the least of your flock and you will reach the hearts of the greatest. Talk easily, just as though you were conversing. Do not bother about flights of oratory. If eloquence is within the soul it will come out without worrying about it. You

cannot manufacture eloquence any more than you can sunlight. Everybody recognizes the difference between the true and the false. Try to be easy in your delivery. Tension spoils as many good preachers as it makes poor golfers. Put on a pleasant expression, even the ghost of a smile. That helps you to loosen up. Talk as if you had an audience of intimate friends and were speaking to them in your library; but keep your language and your thoughts on the plane of dignity. Do not be afraid sometimes to say a pleasant thing that brings out smiles, but do not joke in the pulpit. A smile that passes around the Church relieves tension and regains lost attention. A laugh transports an audience to the theatre. Use verse now and then. It is surprising how a bit of poetry brightens up listeners, even those who at other times care nothing about it. Do not fill your sermons with quotations, even from Holy Scripture. You are preaching, not reciting. Three texts of Scripture that stick are worth ten that are forgotten. Use short texts that do not need much explanation from you, but that explain for you, and give your words authority. A sermon does not call for the exclusion of quotations from profane authors, provided they have said something to strengthen the truth. St. Thomas Aquinas was the greatest student of Aristotle. But try to introduce only such quotations as will make your hearers come to know and recognize the great writers of the Christian religion.

As to the reading you need for style, there is none better in English than Cardinal Newman; but for grouping and choice of words you can with profit study

Ruskin. There is eloquent but restrained beauty in De Quincy. For a commentator I never got very far away from a'Lapide. I know he is antiquated in spots, but I can avoid the spots. For meditation as a preparation for preaching, I go to Bellord. Use your seminary text books for Theology until you have need for something bigger, and then jump right into St. Thomas. For history keep Pastor and Mann on the shelf easiest to reach. Fervor in exhortation you can easily work up from the exercises of St. Ignatius and you get a good retreat at the same time. Rodriguez is a fine supplement. Start picking things out of the saints by reading Capecelatro's St. Philip Neri; and have the four large volumes of Butler where you can dip in now and then, provided now and then is nearly every day.

Of course I know that my shelf of books is venerable with age. You might get quite another from a University professor. I am not worrying about that. I have the professor's shelf, too, and I use it now and then, but not for preaching. We have a very old Gospel. It is the only Gospel we have been charged to preach. I feel safe with those who loved it in the old days, and in the old ways.

I had almost forgotten to congratulate you on your deaconship, but I was interested in what it opens up to you rather than in the fact of it. I do now congratulate you with all my heart on both.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

Yesterday I came upon a verse.....

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

ON RICHES

My dear boy:

Yesterday I came upon a verse from the Psalms which had the effect of deciding the subject of this letter: "They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." There are many passages in Holy Writ which have a message of uneasiness for those whose hearts are set on riches; but I think that this one sounds the clearest warning. It also runs the most direct into the face of the world's judgment, which seems always to be in favor of her wealthy sons. The world takes them to be wise indeed; the richer the wiser and the more to be honored. But Holy Writ meaningly connects "men of riches" with "the foolish of the earth." A great, a surprisingly great lot of misjudgments of men and things will come up for rectification on the Last Day. Imagine the astonishment of those who find, after enjoying all the things that wealth could buy, that there is a condition in which they will be poorer than the beggar whose rags once trembled in the chill wind of their pride. What a way to treat the rich, calling them the fools of the world, and telling them that they are destined to be the empty-handed as well! A plain spoken book is Holy Writ. I wish those who read it would learn of its frankness and honesty.

When you go to your first charge you will face the problem of dollars and cents. An old clerical crony of mine says that it should be "dollars and sense." He thinks that such a way of stating the problem carries the solution with it. To solve the dollar, figure it out in sense. If he means, as he surely does, for he is a sort of saint, the kind of sense that is a result of co-operation with God's grace, then of course he is right. It is a little of that kind of sense that I want to suggest in this letter.

The Church is under the necessity of recognizing the dollar, and the dollar's power. We must use it; but we must not let it use us. If we do we shall fail. Our greatest trouble in connection with the dollar is to see the nearly invisible line that runs between our use of it and its use of us. The wise thing is to play safe, and not shave the line too closely. It is better to err on the side of caution, for the dollar is not a pleasant master. Its power with priests especially lies in making them lazy and neglectful. I never find myself wishing for money that I do not find myself thinking, at the same time, of a long vacation. The good times I can then imagine myself having are almost intoxicating; though God knows also the number of churches and schools and colleges I have built in my dreams of riches. But if I ever come into riches, I fear that I may do even as others have done when their financial dreams came true: postpone the good things and die leaving them untouched. The stickiest stuff on earth is money. If you get it on your fingers it simply won't wash off, perhaps because

no one tries hard enough to secure such an undesired but desirable result.

Once, I had what seemed to me a large sum of money; but just as soon as it was safely tucked away in the bank, I found myself getting stingy. Now, I never was stingy when I had practically no money. Somehow I always then found enough to dole out an alms here and there. But just as soon as I got more than I had ever thought of possessing at one time, I found myself quite poor. I thought myself almost an object of charity. What happened? I invested some of the cash with the usual happy luck of the fool and his money. Then, having contributed my mite towards sending stock-selling thieves on their way to perdition, I got sense for my dollars and gave the rest to pay off a church debt. From that day to this I have never wanted money for my needs. I recovered my peace of mind, and, even in "the coin of the tribute" I got back all that I had given; but I never became rich. Still, I can truthfully testify that the more I give the more generously I receive, both in dollars and sense.

For the life of me I cannot see why a priest should want to be a rich man. Practically all experience shows that riches mean stagnation in the sacerdotal life. The music of clipping coupons has the effect of drowning out the strains of both the *Miserere* and the *Magnificat*. The possession of broad acres takes the eyes off "fields white for the harvest." To feel the power of money is often to ignore the power of the keys. It is never safe for a priest to be too confident of the morrow. A holy uneasiness about the things of this world is a fairly

good guarantee of a sense of security for the things of the spirit. He is merciful who feels in himself the need of mercy. "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given to my soul." (Ps. xciii:19.) A priest should not try to be too comfortable lest he should end his days in misery. If he has the means of worldly comfort he finds that to be one of his chief problems. For me, I have enough problems as it is. God is good enough to keep from me those that I have already shown myself unable to work out successfully. So, if I add to my small store, it will not be by worrying and working that I shall do so. If the money comes it will have to come without a pressing invitation.

A very sad picture often comes to my mind. It is a pen drawing by Gibson called, "Nothing But Fame." It represents a lonely man seated in his magnificent dining room with the untouched fruit of dessert before him. Ghostly hands are seen about, clapping applause. But the eyes of the man have a longing look in them, as if searching for a lost something, and his face shows that he does not hear the clapping. No wonder! All praise is ghostly enough. In the picture a serving maid turns to look at the man in pity as she leaves the room. Nothing but Fame! I saw that scene once at the table of a priest; only it was money he had, and money that was legitimately his. Yet I felt a great sadness for him, even while he was thinking perhaps how foolish I was. Then I think of another picture—the scene of his death. It was hard for him to die. Dollars made it so. We do hate to leave them. He

died alone. Even the doctors and the nurse were absent when the call came. His wonderful plans for leaving his money to good works after his death came to nothing. He had gathered it during life, and made it work to gather more. He used to dream about how he would leave it for God. But he placed his security in a weak box. It broke, as he must have suspected often it would break, when that dread call came. He had had the courage to ask for the Last Sacraments, but not the courage to give his dollars, and thereby gain them.

The best way never to want for what you need is to ignore your need for the sake of your duty. That is a good rule for priests and people; but especially for priests. I have been very poor, my dear boy, very poor, yet I have never been hungry nor in rags. Somehow I always managed by just going where and as I was led to go by God. I have had money, too, as I told you, and behold it was taken from me. Had I kept it, I see now that it would have stopped me from doing the things I was afterwards called upon to do. I see now that the loss of it then was one of my greatest blessings. And I have never missed it. When there is genuine need for money it comes somehow, and in sufficiency. I am poor enough still, yet I feel rich. In truth I am one of the greatest bluffs on earth, for I can act the part of a millionaire, while knowing that my next bank balance will probably show in red ink.

When you are a parish priest, just set your heart on being a good and faithful parish priest. Summon all the powers of your mind and soul to help you be that, and you will not have to talk money every Sunday from

the pulpit. We are often over-solicitous about the material things. We worry too much about where we are going to get what is needed for our parishes, instead of saying our prayers and attending faithfully to our duties. That spirit is what is holding the Church back in America. It makes selfish pastors who cannot lift their eyes from their own boundaries. They are not truly Catholic, for they do not think in terms of the Church Universal, but of the Church local. If all pastors were like them there would be a Catholic Church only through the constant miracle of the divine assistance. I am afraid that God has to intervene only too often to save His scattered children from the over-solicitude of His servants about those who are far from being scattered. We are ready enough to trust in the miracle of God's grace for that part of the world that is in darkness. Why not trust Him more for that part which has an abundance of light? I never yet met one of these ultra-parochial successes within their narrow limits, who did not remind me of the words you find in the Acts: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock" (xx:28). Of course it may be objected that this admonition was addressed to bishops. Well, who told you that I am not thinking of bishops, too?

My dear boy, I greatly fear that some of us are going to step to the Judgment Seat with too great a degree of buoyancy; perhaps with such a degree of it as to dangerously approach presumption. We have an obligation toward the whole flock of Christ, and it is the obligation that we most neglect in America. The building spirit is in us. We catch a spark from the spirit of

the country. We come to worship too much the success that shows. Therefore we worry too much about the material means of attaining it; and that breeds a sort of selfishness in us that is all the more dangerous for being disguised under the appearance of unselfishness. It is a good thing to break that chain on our usefulness as priests of the Church Catholic. We break it by well directed sacrifices, by spreading some of our efforts over fields not our own, and from which we shall never ourselves reap a single grain of credit or praise in this world. I saw a tomb with the sculptured effigy of a great ecclesiastical dignitary lying in seeming satisfaction and peace on the slab that covered it. The sides were adorned with long inscriptions telling of the great things he had done on earth. He must have slaved night and day to have accomplished so much, and he must have raised a great deal of money to have produced such results. I saw these results all around me in the great Cathedral that it took him a lifetime to build. I wanted to knock on his marble forehead, as they say the Cardinal Camerlengo does on the forehead of the dead Pope, but not to ask if he were really dead; rather to inquire what he thought about himself now that he had died. Later on I looked at another effigy of the same kind. It represented a Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. I could glance around at the Cathedral he built: but I felt differently, for I knew that he was not under the marble but out at Mill Hill where his spiritual sons were being prepared for Africa and Asia and the Islands of the Seas. He was a wise Cardinal, for he spread his work to the ends

of the earth and got away from selfishness for London. Yet to him belongs the chief credit for that wonderful masterpiece of Byzantine architecture that is one of the sights of the city. So I did not feel like asking him what he thought about his work now that he had died. I knew that he had "made himself the servant of all."

Dollars are hard taskmasters, and hardest to a priest. Do not seek for them. It is best for you to be free. If they come, bind them to the holy slavery of God, and whip them to do His will. But do not be troubled if they do not come, for your responsibility will then be lessened. St. Francis Assisi feared so much for himself that he deliberately picked out the easiest road that reached the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a consolation for a lot of us priests to know that the road he selected was called Poverty.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

There is in every normal.....

CHAPTER THE NINTH

ON THE CHARITY OF THE PRIEST

My dear boy:

There is in every normal human being a craving for affection. The possession of the love of his flock is one of the greatest consolations of a priest. There is no denying that it is natural and legitimate to seek for the love of those whose spiritual interests we are set to guide and guard. I worry if I think I have lost the affection of the least among my people. I am never happier than when I feel the love of the little children for me. Their smiling faces when I enter the school-rooms are the brightening of my day. I can chase gloom away by fleeing to them, or out into the country where I am always so sure of a welcome from the scattered ones of the flock. Yes, I know the value of affection. I am glad to have it. I even seek it as prospectors seek gold. It is my gold; and I am not ashamed of my weakness, if weakness it be. I never knew how deep-rooted this affection of pastor for flock could become until I had to go through the ordeal of parting from my first parish. Cold and indifferent as I had always thought myself, yet that ordeal was bitterly hard, even if no one knew of the hardness but myself.

Why is it that we priests do not realize much more keenly that this wonderful affection which unites the Catholic priest in bonds of love to his flock is but a

yearning for something higher and nobler? Yet so it is. We desire affection as pastors of souls. We know that our people are better when they feel it. We are more useful to them when we have gained it. They are nearer to God when they are near to His ministers. It has an effect on us, too, that is all for our own good. It draws us closer to our work and our duty. It makes for a feeling of greater responsibility. It deepens the thought of our own unworthiness. It puts a guard over our lives that makes us fear to do anything to weaken it. The priest who is genuinely loved by his flock, and who knows it, is jealously careful to keep himself as nearly as possible in a condition to merit it. Only one thing can imperil it. That thing is sin. No priest can win the love of his people who does not show by his every action that he is safe in the love of God.

Theophilus of Antioch wrote a most remarkable series of letters, all joined together to make one of the earliest books of Christian Apologetics, to his acquaintance the pagan Autolycus, who had asked Theophilus to "show him his God." This was the answer he received: "Show me yourself and I shall show you my God." He did not mean to appeal to the mystery of human life and the impossibility of its explanation by paganism. He meant to say: Show me the noble part of you, your soul, and from its nobility I shall lead you to the knowledge of nobility in its perfection. The human soul is a photograph of God. We are made to God's image and likeness. God asks our love for Him. Everything that is noble in us urges us to bury our spiritual selves in the ocean of that love. Every virtue is but an imper-

fect manifestation of it in us; but, at the same time, an urge to seek the perfection of it, which is found only in God. This desire for the affection of our spiritual children is part of the photograph of God in us. The giving of that affection when it is deserved, is a part of the same photograph in them.

It is a significant thing that Christ, when asked by His disciples how to pray, began His instruction with the words, "Our Father." From this title flowed the great prayer of Christians. It is now, by common custom, shared by all Christ's ministers. Thus used it indicates the kind of love we owe God, the kind of love He wants from us, the kind of love we hope to gain from our people, and the kind of love they may legitimately have for their pastors. To go back to Theophilus, speaking of God he wrote: "If I say that He is Light, I name but His own work; if I call Him Word, I name but His sovereignty; if I call Him Mind, I speak but of His wisdom; if I say that He is a Spirit, I speak of His breath; if I call Him Wisdom, I speak of His offspring; if I call Him Strength, I speak of His sway; if I call Him Power, I am mentioning His activity; if Providence, I but mention His goodness; if I call Him Kingdom, I but mention His glory; if I call Him Lord, I but mention Him being Judge; if I call him Judge, I speak of Him as being just; if I call Him Father, I say everything."

How now are we to win and hold our place as fathers to our people? I have already told you: Avoid sin and cultivate the love of God in your own heart, which is the charity that "surpasseth understanding."

It may surpass understanding, but like the chemical combination of food needed to keep us well, while it cannot be known absolutely, yet it exists. We do not understand the charity of God for His children, but we have it, and daily and hourly we feel it. When it is absent, we know that the soul and heart are sick. When it is too long absent, we know that our spiritual sickness is becoming chronic. If each man, so the food scientists tell us, would eat only what supplies the essential chemical and mineral elements in proper proportion to the human body, he would live out his allotted span of life without any sickness, save that which comes through accidents. His body would, then, be its own physician. It is the same with the soul, only the matter is simpler. We often think of the different virtues as many. In truth they are but one. Christ Himself epitomized them all in the precept of Charity.

Our people know all this, even without knowing that they know it. So they quite instinctively look first for charity in their pastors. It is not without significance that the kitchen door of the Catholic priest, often unpromising enough in appearance, is the most popular calling place for tramps. Have you not noticed how a poor old wanderer will deliberately pass a host of well-dressed men and women when he glimpses a Roman collar in the midst of a crowd? He knows the one who at least will find it hard to refuse him an alms, even out of a slim purse. We sometimes get angry at these things, forgetting the compliment implied. How naturally, too, do we become the confidants of our flocks; and more, how naturally do we often become the con-

fidants of even those outside the Fold. Shane Leslie, biographer of Cardinal Manning, wrote of numberless letters found after the death of His Eminence, none of which could be published because they were almost as sacred as the confessional. What were they? Just the letters of people in trouble, many from those outside the Church, to whom the great Cardinal had been a true father. After that revelation, I better understand how it was that Manning succeeded in gaining the hearts of the people of England.

Once I heard a discussion on the life of Cardinal Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, by a group of Irishmen who had little sympathy with what they supposed were his political views. Almost all of them were unfriendly critics. They charged the Cardinal with being a "Castle Hack," no compliment to an Irishman. There was no defense offered by anyone present until a timid little man wanted to know if any of the party had read a story about the Cardinal that had appeared a few days before in a weekly paper. None of them had; so the timid little man told of a sick call that came to the house of this Prince of the Church instead of to the presbytery where his Cathedral clergy lived. It was the Cardinal who received the call. Without a word to explain that it would be attended at once if taken to the proper place, His Eminence, remembering that he, too, was a priest, went out to care for the sick person. When his ministrations were done he had to listen to the thanks of the relatives, whose remarks were directed along the lines of a parallel between the supposed snobbishness of the Cardinal-Archbishop and the striking

charity of their humble visitor. The Cardinal heard it all in silence. As he was leaving, one of the sick man's family asked his name, so that they could remember it with gratitude. "My name," he said simply, "is Paul Cullen." The effect of this story was marked. From hostility, the faces of the critics registered deep sympathy. The most ungracious remark that followed was this: "Well, after all, Cardinal Cullen was a good priest, even if he differed from us a trifle in politics." From experience I have learned that a priest's charity may not only cover up a multitude of faults, but that it becomes the magic wand that touches his every minor defect and turns it into the gold of true affection. I do not know who uttered it, but I am struck with the force of this saying: "Did universal charity prevail, earth would be a heaven and hell a fable." Surely did it prevail, this earth would taste in advance the happiness of heaven; and as for hell, no son of Adam would inhabit it. What makes the world a place of misery and sorrow is neither sickness, death nor poverty. It is the absence of universal charity.

My dear boy, you have heard that famous saying about Justice, that if driven from amongst men it should by right find its last abode in the hearts of kings. Alas! even there, where duty assigns it to dwell as in a palace, how often is Justice an unwelcome guest. But Charity's palace should be in the hearts of priests. If it is not there, where shall it be found? Only two classes of people—priests and the poor—could not well be dispensed with, or Charity would wander about the world desolately seeking a home. The rich man patronizes

in the practice of philanthropy; the learned one escapes charity with fine phrases and elegant dissertations on its merits; rulers are all for expediency, which has now become their one recognized "virtue"; the professions take no account of charity; big business measures it according to its profits; but for the poor it always remains the one great luxury they are permitted to enjoy. They practice it so much towards one another that, if their charity be measured in proportion to their possessions, they become the almoners of the earth. For priests, almost always poor, too, charity is the strong bond that makes them worthy of the love of the poor, and, therefore, of the love of Him Who loved the poor enough to leave them as the precious legacy of His Church.

Our Charity must stand its test. St. Paul wrote for his beloved Corinthians, and for us all, about the terrible strength of it. Charity stretches human nature to the limit of its endurance. To practice it properly we must conquer ourselves. Often we must seemingly give battle even to Justice, for "Charity is kind. Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up . . . . seeketh not her own, ... thinketh no evil, ... beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." What a supreme virtue, what an all-embracing one it must be to bear such a strain and still live under it.

When you become a priest, my dear boy, try to avoid making excuses for uncharitableness. Never mind what your neighbor may have said in criticism of you. The thing that counts is what you may say in criticism of

him. Never trouble yourself about whether a sick man or woman did or did not support your parish. Your charity shall be judged by the support you give to them in their hour of need. Be careful not to let your rules of order in parish government interfere with a greater rule of order, the government of yourself. Be heedless of slights and injuries when charity calls on you either to forget them or to forget her. Never look upon your crucifix, and it ought always to be near enough to see, without repeating at least one of the Seven Last Words to your heart and soul: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." O my God, here hast Thou put the whole Christian message into ten small words. Here hast Thou, with a feeble dying breath, given a rule of life for Thy priesthood. Here hast Thou, in a last whisper, proclaimed the secret of salvation for the world. Here has Thou answered the question, "Who is God?" in the death rattle of Thine only begotten Son.

A life of many years in the priesthood has taught me these things: The purse of the charitable is never empty. The measure of Charity can never be filled. The answer of Charity is never ungenerous. The word of Charity is never unkind. The patience of Charity is never exhausted. The forgiveness of Charity is not bounded. The judgment of Charity presses hard the claims of Justice. The simple law of Charity cannot be codified on this earth, and still less in heaven. Charity is the secret of priestly success as it is the secret of universal salvation. Charity is peace.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

Today I had lunch with.....

CHAPTER THE TENTH

ON LEARNING FROM OUR FLOCKS

My dear boy:

Today I had lunch with a pious Catholic layman who suggested a "best seller." "I am half inclined," he said, "to make myself rich by writing and publishing a book called: 'A Practical Retreat for Priests; by a Layman.'" Now, as you know, I do not easily take offense, for I try to get the hidden lesson out of such well-meaning jolts as that given me by my lay friend. The idea is not such a bad one, in theory at least. We can learn a great deal from our flocks.

It is a fact that every general learns a lot about his business from the officers and soldiers under his command. It is a more widely accepted fact that every captain of industry has profited chiefly by experience gained from handling his men. A schoolmaster once told me that his pupils had educated him while he was instructing them. A wise political leader is the one who always has his ear to the ground. I believe a priest can learn much from his flock; in fact the priest who does not try to learn from his flock is not likely to go far on the road to success in his ministry. When I was very new to the pulpit, I was much perturbed one day to hear that two young high-school girls were noting down some of my mispronunciations. My first thought was one of resentment; but the sober second was to get my

hand on their lists. I felt that they might have long ones, for I had spent some years in a French Seminary where I had not had the opportunity of hearing good English spoken very often; and knew that I must be giving the French softness to my harsher mother tongue. It took some diplomacy to do it, but I got the lists and profited in more ways than one. Not the least part of the profit came from the conceit it knocked out of me at that most critical time in a young priest's life, his first year out.

Another reminiscence. In the course of one of my first sermons I was very bold in censuring my parishioners for a lack of zeal for the beauty of God's house. I felt highly elated that I had worked off my first scolding with success, for I saw that my words had made an impression. They surely had, as I learned that day even before I left the sacristy. I found an indignant old parishioner who had helped to build that house of God in the pioneer days when it was the glory and pride of a scattered and poverty-stricken flock. Their hands had done much of the labor on it. Their sacrifices had caused it to come into being. They loved it because it was their hard-won offering to God. Their effort was what gathered the straying sheep beneath its shelter. I had not understood. It could scarcely be expected that I would understand so soon. I had spoken in my ignorance and was ashamed. Then and there I learned many things. One was that, while an apology for a mistake may humble us for the moment, it exalts us for the rest of our lives. Another was, that you can make an indignant Irishman suspect that he is wrong

by conceding that he might be right. Another, that zeal is not an excuse for talking before you know what you are talking about; and so on to the end of a chapter that has not even yet come to an end. I should have read the Book of Proverbs very carefully during the days of my retreat for ordination, and put this one on the tablets of my memory: "A fool uttereth all his mind; a wise man deferreth, and keepeth it till afterwards."

Without a doubt the greatest lesson we may learn from our flocks is the lesson of prudence. The way little words and thoughtless acts have of taking the role of an alpine snowball and turning into avalanches, may be distressing but is also very instructive. We do not mend matters by a pulpit denunciation of gossips. Like the poor, the gossips will always be with us. Our only safety is in giving them nothing to gossip about. Of course, some will then invent topics for gossip; but it is easier to kill a lie than to kill the consequences of a bitter truth. Remember well the advice of St. Paul: "Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man." (Col. iv:6.) If you do not heed that counsel now, be sure that your flock will teach it to you later, and you will pay in sadness for the teaching.

You will come in contact with people who will teach you, better even than you were taught in the Seminary, the lesson of simple piety. Not all the saints have been canonized, and sanctity is not a product of books. There are still saints who cannot read. In fact most of those I have met in my own life had a wisdom in spiritual

things that they got only by close communion with God; some who even knew no prayers by heart except the Rosary, the Confiteor and the Acts of Contrition, Faith, Hope and Charity. It is nothing short of a spiritual education to meet these people; and to be their director is to receive an invitation from God to "go up higher." Their humility is an unspoken and unthought protest against our pride. Their submission to God's will is a stinging rebuke to our own selfishness. Their fidelity to the practice of religion is a powerful urge to our own fidelity to the duties of our ministry. God still speaks out of the mouths of children, and these, even though old and feeble, are His favored little ones. They are ours to guard and guide, but they are also guards and guides to us. A traveller lost in the forest may find a woodsman's tired child, exhausted with play as night comes on. He will carry the little one in his arms to home and safety, but it is the child who will show him the way out of the forest and its dangers. "A little child shall lead them" were not words spoken without significance. In truth, my dear boy, the most precious legacies God gave us were His favored children the poor, from whose ranks have always come the greatest of saints and the most confiding of sinners. It is hard to tell which of these two I have learned to love the more. One class appeals to me for having pure hearts and unsullied souls; but the other awakens the father instinct, and fills me with the holiest of joy as I see how simply and confidently all in it knock at the door of His mercy.

The flock of a priest is a constant appeal to him

against stubbornness. They yield so kindly and so often to our whims that we might well be always seeking means to please them within wise limits. What matters a bit of extra work now and then? If it pleases and profits only a few we might well prepare that extra sermon, or give time for that extra devotion. Don't complain that they ask for too much; that they are not satisfied with "The Devotion of the Fifty-two Sundays," but would add the Nine Fridays and the Holy Hour. It may be our Great Chief Pastor Who is asking for that extra bit of labor from us. It is for Him as well as for them. It is a mistake for a priest to tie himself down to a lot of hard and fast rules and regulations in his pastoral relations. Some of that is necessary, but an excess of it, and stubborn adherence to the excess, is sure to injure some poor souls. A priest has no more right to office hours than a village doctor—less right. If the spirit moves when "it listeth" we must be on hand when the move comes. If we must be "all things to all men," there seems to be no valid reason why we should try to act the part of bronze statues. There is a time and a place for firmness, and in the face of evil a stubborn sense of right helps to overcome wrong; but before sincere piety, before sorrow, before conversion, before sickness, before zeal and mercy, there is no place and no time for the inflexible. Too many of us get the name of being strong-willed and strong-minded at the expense of lost opportunities.

There is a virtue called magnanimity, which should always find in the priest a great exemplar. Christ, our High Priest, certainly was its greatest, and are we not

His sacerdotal brothers? With that peculiar genius we have in America for expressing ourselves strikingly, if not always elegantly, we have coined a title for the magnanimous. We express much when we refer to them as Big Men. There are degrees in this unorganized Society of Big Men; but when we use the title in its fulness we always refer it to the magnanimous men, the men who have big souls, who do things in a big way, who scorn to be small in their dealings with others, who would prefer to suffer rather than lose the dignity that comes from being great-hearted and great-souled. But he is a rare human being, the real Big Man. Most of us have our own particular pettinesses. We are big in some things, but small, very small, in others. But I never yet knew where a priest lost anything by being a Big Man. Magnanimity pays in this world as well as in the next.

If I wanted to cite examples of great magnanimity, I should not go high to find the most striking ones. I should not need to, for they are nearly all to be found amongst the poor, amongst the little ones of the flock. The last loaf is divided oftener than the gold bond. The most sensitive people on earth are those who have received the most, but the Big Man cannot afford to be a sensitive one. If we are to insist on getting all we earn, we must bid goodbye to the hope of being Big Men. If we withhold our hands from mercy because we think it is not deserved or appreciated, we have no claim on the virtue of magnanimity. If we cannot forgive seventy times seven, we cannot stand the searching test. The Big Man may not be dumb and blind

before adverse criticism, but it does not prevent him from acting as if he were not only all that but deaf as well. He may not be able to face injustice without pain, but he is able to keep it from showing on his face or in his acts.

It is in the little family circle that we find the best lessons of magnanimity. They come more often from the mother than from the father, and their home is the cabin rather than the palace. I often think that the greatest wrongs are perpetrated by husbands against their wives. It seems as if the male brute—for in these cases he has usually brutalized himself—has a special facility for thinking up affronts to give to the faithful wife. If she were of the kind who live in palaces, she would fly first to tears, then to the neighbors, and then to the divorce courts. But it is not so with the faithful Christian wife who has learned the lesson of magnanimity at the foot of the Cross. With her everything is forgiven in return for the kind word, the kind look, or the begrudged kindly action. I have known such wives to suffer for years and then, when it seemed impossible to bear the suffering any longer, to wipe the memory of it completely out because her husband, sober for a day, had thought of buying a pair of shoes for the baby. The magnanimity of such women seems like a constantly recurring miracle; and surely it is a miracle of God's grace. But in spite of such lessons, only too often the spiritual guide of such women sinks into despondency, out of which resentment is bred, at a single criticism. What is it that makes us priests so sensitive? Some one said it is because of the lonely

life we lead. But do we lead a lonely life? Some of us do, especially those in the isolated rural parishes. But even such priests have no right to be lonely. They have their books, and they are welcome everywhere. But they get into the habit of shutting themselves up and away from people, failing to cultivate the virtues that the Seminary tried so hard to inculcate. They are then easy marks for the critic, and all the natural magnanimity that they might have cultivated in their souls falls before the first blast of the storm. I knew one priest who became despondent and resentful because a visiting stranger had criticized the way in which he sang Mass. Now there was no reason in the world for praising the quality of his voice or the correctness of his rendition. It was commonly said in the diocese that he sang the Preface to the tune of "St. Patrick's Day"; for it was the only tune he knew. But St. Patrick, if he had a musical ear, would find small honor in that fact. I knew another who would forgive almost anything said about him except a criticism of his preaching; but everyone knew that he could not preach. These, of course, are abnormal cases, and are little ones at that. But with these sensitive characters it is the small sting that hurts. They can dodge spears and even bullets, but the pin-prick makes them angry every time. The test of magnanimity is rarely in great things. Somehow it is really always in the little ones.

On the other hand, I have known men of our cloth who simply could not be disturbed; who would do a favor for an enemy far more readily than for a friend; who would go to the point of apologizing when they

knew they were right and their opponents wrong, when they realized that the said opponents sincerely believed the opposite. I have known priests with whom it was quite an impossibility to have a misunderstanding, for they simply would not permit it. They considered that peace was too desirable a thing to throw away, and that there was nothing on this earth worth selling it for.

There are thousands of lessons we can learn from others, and especially from our flocks, and still more especially from the poorest amongst them. Humility is one of the best; but, as a matter of fact, I do not know any one of the virtues that is not preached daily in practice by those we meet in our ministry. It would seem as if the most responsive person in the priest's Sunday audience should be himself. He has prepared his sermon; he has weighed what he wants to say; he must have sincerity behind his words if those words are to be fruitful. Yet how often does the chief fruit of that sermon go to someone who understood least the words that were uttered, but who understood best the meaning of them? My dear boy, preach every sermon at yourself, as I suggested when writing of meditation, especially those that have as their direct object the inculcating of virtue. Give to your own soul the counsels that you know it needs, and your words will be effective for others. Then, when the inevitable fall comes in your enthusiasm for practicing what you preach, you will find yourself surrounded by the encouragement of members of your flock who, having put into practice what you advised, now preach the sermon back at you, by example, when you most need it.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

In the Seminary you are often.....

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

ON THE CHASTITY REQUIRED OF A PRIEST

My dear boy:

In the Seminary you are often reminded of the vows implied by your acceptance of Holy Orders. There you hear and read what Scripture and the Fathers say about the virtue of purity. The obligation is now upon you of leading a life of chastity. I cannot hope to deepen the impression already made upon you by your training and your reading, for I feel sure that the impression is both deep and lasting. But I can do something that perhaps your directors did not do. I can tell you in advance a few of the things that you may have to face, bravely and successfully, if you would keep, not only the letter, but the spirit of your promise to God. I can speak as one who has been through the battle, rather as one who is still in the battle, and who appreciates from experience the need of considering the spirit as well as the letter of our vow of chastity. If we keep the spirit the letter will never worry us. It is really true to say that no good priest has ever had any trouble about keeping the letter of his vow if he has kept the spirit of it. When he begins to experience great trouble about the letter he has long ago ceased to be a good priest, for the spirit of chastity is mortally wounded in him.

It must be remembered that the chastity of priests—

I mean the outward sign of chastity—is well protected, as it were by two guard-rails along the path of that virtue. One of these guard-rails is a vigilant faithful, which instinctively dreads even the suspicion of a stain upon their spiritual leaders and fathers. Your people will surround your priestly life with the protection of their love. They will be jealous of your virtue. They will be sad if they find that you are lacking in it. They will hate with bitterness whatever tempts you, whatever puts in danger the chastity which they expect to find in you. Do not, then, be impatient with people who are critical of conduct which they realize, better than you think, threatens that cleanliness of soul which they have a right to expect. Their attitude may annoy you, for naturally you will feel sure of yourself, but do not permit the annoyance to last. It is a good healthy sign of your own success as a spiritual leader that your children are jealous of anything that might later on spoil you for them.

The other guard-rail is not a sympathetic one, for it is doing its service blindly. It is made up of the enemies of the Church and of her priesthood. But sometimes that rail is even more efficient than the other. True, it works through evil-minded slander or mistaken views of your state of life. The enemies of the Church and of the priesthood desire your fall, especially if brought about by a lapse from chastity. They will ever watch for evidence, either that you have fallen or that you are on the edge of the precipice. They will gloat over even an appearance of a loss of the virtue. But this should only make you cautious, should make

you watch yourself. On one side you have the jealous confidence of your own people as a protection, and on the other you have the jealous envy of those who hate you and all you stand for.

But the path of virtue is itself a safeguard that will help you keep strictly the spirit of your vow, because it is a well-worn path, plainly marked, smoothed by the holy feet of the thousands who have travelled over it. Though the road passes through a forest, and must often be travelled over in darkness and dryness of soul, yet it cannot be mistaken. You cannot wander off it without knowing that you are leaving. It has even a light at every by-path, at almost every step, to warn you; so it is impossible to deceive yourself or to be deceived. If you fall, it will be with full knowledge that you are falling. You cannot offer the excuse of ignorance, for none but blind men, trained as you have been trained, can miss the road, even by the measure of an inch. To make the path safer, all along the way stand guards, from the veiled-faced one who gave us the "Imitation of Christ," to the strong, firm-featured Apostle of the Gentiles. They shout their warnings or they whisper them; while the whole Church Triumphant prays ever and always for the purity of the priesthood of the Church Militant; just as a nation prays that glory shall never depart from her standards and the soldiers of her armies.

In spite of all this, however, there are great and little dangers to face. I do not need to warn you against the great dangers; but there is always need to warn against the little ones, for it is remarkable how the little ones

have in them the greater power once they get a start. If you take care of the small temptations against the virtue of priestly purity, the great ones will never present themselves. That is why I tell you that, if we keep the spirit of the law, the letter will never be a worry to us. I am afraid that it is true to say that the unfortunate man who sins even once by outward act and deed, has already sinned a thousand times in the hidden depths of his heart and soul. I am not afraid to say that, because I know from long experience in the confessional how true it is. If it be true of others, it is certainly true also of priests. It is in the forests that the beasts lurk and await their prey. They fear that light lit by God's protecting hand, as other beasts in the flesh fear the fire that the hand of man has kindled. Beware, then, my dear boy, of the small temptations against purity, for they are small only in appearance. In reality they are the by-paths that lead you into the forest. St. Chrysostom has given you a rule of conduct in one wise saying: "The soul of the priest should be purer than the rays of the sun." Even small lapses, then, it is your duty to avoid; for it is only in the absolute purity of mind and heart that you will find full purity of soul and body. Nothing less will make you safe and insure your perseverance.

To come down to specific warnings: One of the first dangers to the virtue of purity attacks us through reading. To keep yourself abreast of the times you will find it necessary to read the papers. But if you read them, and especially the Sunday editions, with your mind bent on avoiding anything to sully your soul, you

will very soon, and almost instinctively, cast aside certain pages. You will not cast these pages aside more than a few times before you will not want to see them at all. In all probability you will read some of the monthly magazines. The very covers of many of them will tell you which ones to avoid. Those whose covers are glaring invitations to buy, are the very ones out of which you have nothing to learn.

It will be more difficult for you to avoid temptation from your reading of books. So much "elegance" is buried in filth that it will seem necessary, perhaps, to risk the one in order to have the other. But I need not tell you that you lose nothing of what Shakespeare, for example, can teach you, by completely ignoring a certain number of his poems. Certain books in Italian and French should make no appeal. There are enough masterpieces in those languages to teach you all you need know about them without sullying you with the things that are unclean. But even if you should have to condemn yourself to literary mediocrity by casting aside the reading of elegant literature because of its obscene dress, your loss would be well compensated. Happily, however, you do not need to cultivate knowledge of your mother tongue, or of any other tongue for that matter, by sending your mind to a brothel instead of a school. I honestly believe that the greatest danger to a priest often comes from the reading that the world's demand for so-called culture apparently puts upon him. Only on the Day of Judgment shall we know in full of the horrors which so-called "good literature" has been responsible.

Next to the reading of bad books as a danger to the priest who desires to keep the spirit of his vow of chastity, comes his contact with the world, which seems to have a genius for inventing a new style of temptation every day. If, when you leave the Seminary to enter that world, you make it a habit to guard your eyes and your ears, you will find it easy to keep on guarding them as you grow older; and one of the ways to guard them is absence from places where the dance of death to purity is on. Within the confines of your own world you may be a little troubled; but when you go outside that, temptations will be multiplied. That you may walk safely amongst them, cultivate the habit of closing your ears to immoral stories and of dropping your eyes before pictured vice. Remember that there are many people who make a living by pandering to the lusts of others, and because they do it in a so-called respectable way they are taken as respectable themselves. Their company is no aid to the practice of the virtue of purity.

I scarcely need warn you regarding your conduct towards women. You have been fully warned on that point. Let me add just this sane advice of an old professor: Draw a circle about you and never let a woman step within. But I believe that women are often slandered by being pictured to young priests as very generally playing the part of the temptress. Women are more religious than men. They live better and purer lives than men. They are more faithful to their spiritual ideals than men. The average Christian woman has a perfect horror in her soul at the thought that any priest

could make light of his vow of chastity. Of course there are always the exceptions, and we must be on our guard against them. But my own experience, which has now run long past a silver jubilee, leads me to say that the exceptions, at least amongst Catholic women, are quite rare. In fact, I am frank to say that I have never met an exception amongst the members of any flock over which I was ever placed. Nor have I ever heard of a case of one of our brethren, the supposed victim of a temptress, who had not himself chiefly to blame for his sad condition. Let us get out of the habit of blaming other people, and remember the guard rails of the well-marked road. On the Day of Judgment I hope there will be few of us convicted of violating our vow of chastity. But of the few who are thus guilty, I do not think there will be one who can successfully cloak his sin behind the greater sin of another.

My dear boy, be sure of these things: You cannot read bad books and keep a clean mind. You cannot repeat an evil tale, or a filthy anecdote, and have a clean heart. You cannot let your eyes wander and at the same time give them the clear spiritual vision. Habits are easily formed. Once the first wrong step is taken it becomes easier to take the next. If you try honestly to get the habit of clean thinking, clean talking, clean acting, your soul will be clean. Nations repeat the story of individuals, and all history is a warning. When you read it you know that the historian does not need to moralize. The record does that without him. Long before Babylon, the same evil cursed one race after another; brought them low and blotted out their glory

—the evil of impurity. If Macaulay's traveller from New Zealand ever stands on that broken arch of London Bridge and gazes on the ruins of the Cathedral of the fallen Empire, he will know the enemy that pulled both Empire and Cathedral down. So shall it be with our own Republic if it dies before its time. Even though the Church has the promise of indefectibility, yet that promise does not apply to every part of it. It has fallen into ruins before in many lands, and it may fall into ruins in our own. But wherever it has thus fallen, or wherever it shall fall, be sure that the crime will be laid by God on its own children, and especially on its priests. This is the truth that revelation and experience have taught: A chaste priesthood is the safeguard of religion and civilization. The Christian priesthood upon which all civilization depends must be filled with the spirit of purity.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

When you become a priest.....

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

ON THE COMPANIONSHIP OF PRIESTS WITH ONE ANOTHER

My dear boy:

When you become a priest, inevitably you will be thrown into the intimate companionship of other priests; in fact, you will probably find little satisfaction except in the company of priests. I have always looked upon the desire of a young student to meet priests, and of their willingness to allow him that association, as one of the signs of vocation. When I found ecclesiastical students, all through their vacations, making it a point to avoid priests and to seek only the company of the laity, even when they had the opportunity of doing otherwise, I always doubted the call of God to them. I do not believe that I ever made a mistake when I applied that rule. When you leave the Seminary you will, of course, see much more of the laity than you see now, but that will be in the line of duty. When, however, you seek counsel, or comfort, or recreation, you will go to find it in the company of other priests. Your best friends will naturally be found amongst them.

It is, however, a strange proof of the perversity of human nature that we become most jealous of those we love. From the day you are ordained until the day you die it will be your fate never to be afflicted with the temptation of jealousy for anyone except a brother

priest. If I have made this statement too broad, then let me admit exceptions, invoking at the same time the old saying that exceptions prove the rule. For, though priests are destined to be your best friends, they are also the only ones with whom you run a race in this world. The great trouble is that we forget the kind of race we are running; and here again I must ask you to remember that the inspired Book is giving us a warning when it speaks of those who run a race in which all may win a prize. Yes, it is true that we are running a race with our brother priests, but it is a race to do good, to save souls, to promote God's interests and to conquer for His Kingdom. We are equipped for that race according to our need, and according to what God expects from each one of us. So we cannot judge this race by worldly standards. They simply will not fit the situation. We too often think they do, and, making this mistake, imagine that we have grounds for complaint and jealousy. A good comparison occurring to me is from the game of golf. A friend once very proudly exhibited to me a beautiful silver cup. He told me that he had won it in a tournament in which all the best players of his golf club had participated. Now I knew that his score very rarely went below one hundred, while " bogey" on the course was eighty-two. I knew very little about golf at that time, but I knew enough to realize that a man who could not get his game below the hundred mark had no right to be considered much of a golfer. It was later on that I heard the famous dictum, "when a man begins to play in less than a hundred he is neglecting his business." I was very much

surprised, then, when my friend told me that he had won the cup in a tournament, and so expressed myself. He laughingly instructed me on the rules, telling me that he had a handicap of twenty, which really meant that he had made the course in one hundred and five. I then found out that members of the club are supposed to hand in from three to five of their best scores, and, according to the average, are credited with a certain number of strokes. It was quite possible under such conditions for a man actually playing one hundred and five to take advantage of his handicap and beat others who have only six or seven strokes as an allowance. Now we priests are all playing the game that God has given us to play. Our natural defects are our particular handicaps. They are all known to God, but the discerning human eye even may make an allowance for some of them. So far as the spiritual equipment of a priest is concerned, only God can make the allowance, and God does. Thus it happens that half-a-dozen young men will be ordained priests, and the Seminary directors look with hopefulness for a brilliant career from one of them, assigning the others to minor places. But in actual experience everything may be reversed. The least equipped in the Seminary may develop talents outside of it that will send him far and away in advance of his companions. In the Seminary, for example, he may have shown no ability for preaching, but with a few years of practice and reading he may become one of the most brilliant of orators. Everything does not turn out as the Seminary directors think they foresee. But things turn out according to God's plans unless

man interferes with them. He often interferes through jealousy. The poet Schiller has a terrible line about jealousy: "O jealousy, thou magnifier of trifles!" That is just what jealousy is; especially in the case of priests. When we remember the fact that we are all running a race, and that God makes the handicaps, it ought to be plain to us that every sort of clerical jealousy concerns itself only about trifles. I have let my mind wander over what appear to be the most serious causes for jealousies, and, in the light of that race, I have not been able to hit upon a single one that has any seriousness in it. The strongest of them is a mere trifle. But somehow, if we do not keep our spiritual eyes open, we find that we are constantly magnifying trifles, and therefore constantly putting God's plans in jeopardy. We prevent good works from being done, or we make it hard for those who were given special missions to carry them out. I am fully convinced that the work of the Church would have advanced by this time into every country on earth, and that the Gospel would really have been "preached to every creature," if the Church had not been constantly hampered by the fact that even her own ministers have failed always to keep their spiritual eyes open on this important matter.

Jealousy is a destroyer of unity. God does not permit it to destroy the doctrinal unity that is required for the life of His Church. He sustains that by a miracle of His power. But the care of the Church's mission He has given into the hands of men. These are men of free-will, and God does not interfere with free-will. Perverse human nature rebels, and jealousy is the re-

sult, but not the final result. The final result is injury to ourselves, which is important enough, but more often injury to souls, which is a matter of supreme importance. We all have a certain contempt for Saul who became jealous of David's victory over the Philistines because the women came out singing: "Saul slew his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." But these women of Israel were thinking less of the result for God than the glory of their nation, and King Saul certainly had his own glory alone in mind. With us it is a different situation. It is the City of God that we are fighting for, and the applause of men counts for nothing. The reward comes from above. There is, then, not the slightest reason for us to be jealous of one another. Our jealousy is something like the folly of Cain. Both he and Abel offered sacrifices to God. Cain could have made his as acceptable as that of Abel. It was not because Abel wanted to surpass his brother that his sacrifice was more pleasing to God, but because he gave his best with a good heart. In the same way, jealousy amongst us is usually based upon the fact that one man actually does do his best while the other lags behind. The jealous man is usually the unprofitable servant. He ought to remember the words of Proverbs: "A faithful man shall be much praised." In dealing with your fellow priests, remember the handicaps and the race. It is wise always to put yourself a little below your brethren. Humility cannot live with jealousy.

As often as you have to make visits, as often as you are sad and lonesome, as often as you are discouraged, seek out the company of the wise brother priest. Tell

your troubles to him and not to the laity. They may be full of sympathy; but the moment you show them that the world has won you enough to instil discouragement and jealousy into your soul, they will think of bringing its standards to bear upon the case. They cannot always help that. Besides, you were ordained to help them, but they were not ordained to help you. If you fly with your troubles to your lay friends you will be merely reversing the order that God Himself established. There is nothing that makes for good feeling amongst priests more than the way one leans upon the other for advice and encouragement. No priest, and especially no pastor, has a right to be cross and unsympathetic with anyone; but such an attitude to another priest is nothing short of a disaster. One day a reference was made in my company to a priest who had deserted his post, and fallen from his high estate. There was only one among those present when his name was mentioned who had known him in the days when he was supposed to be a faithful pastor. That man was recognized by every one of his companions as charity personified. But when we asked him about his fallen brother, he shook his head and said: "I knew for years before his fall that the end was inevitable." I asked him on what he based his judgment, and this is what he answered: "After the first few years of his pastorate I never saw him at a conference or a retreat, at a jubilee or a funeral. For the conferences and retreats he always had an excuse; the excuse of alleged ill-health. For the others he made no excuses. He simply did not go. For more than

ten years he was never known to visit even his nearest priest-neighbor. When one of them, not understanding, visited him, there was a pointed reference to the next train out of town. He avoided the company of priests. Yes, I saw the disaster coming for years." If, after your ordination, you find a distaste for the company of your brethren of the clergy, you had better look to yourself.

In visiting other priests a great deal depends upon the trend of the conversation. It is too much to suppose that all of the time should be absorbed in discussions of spiritual themes. In fact, it works out in practice that very little time is spent on such discussions, and thereby great loss is sustained. We seem ashamed to bring up such topics until we come to a question of personal direction; when we happen to think we are in need of counsel. But we are always in need of counsel, and more often are we in need of mutual help. We ought not to be ashamed to bring up spiritual topics and our own spiritual experiences for at least part of the time that we spend in the company of other priests. Retreats are good for us, but an honest discussion on spiritual things between the old priest and the young one often does more good than a retreat. Yet we lock up our hearts, even though we sometimes burn with the desire to open them. Our usefulness depends on our being in trim and training all the time. When the athlete is training he never forgets, standing, sitting or lying down, that he is in training. But how unimportant, compared with the work that we have to do, is the work that is cut out for him. We seem to make

our visits to other priests breaks in our training, when in reality they could be made the most useful of exercises.

More frequently during the visits of priests to one another discussions about books and intellectual questions arise. That is just as it should be. I have already told you that what the Seminary gives us is only the foundation. Better say that the Seminary gives us the tools and shows us how to use them. They are kept in condition and sharpened by intellectual discussions as well as by reading. We read in private, but we absorb interest for more and better reading, and a knowledge of the things we should read, chiefly by discussions with those who have similar interests. Consequently, priests who spend hours in one another's company and fail not only to enter into spiritual topics but also to pay attention to their intellectual life, might with more profit stay at home. By no stretch of the imagination can we conceive of the utility of discussing batting averages and the heroes of the diamond, in preference to the latest good books on sociology or economics for instance. We have surely enough problems arising today in the industrial world, all of which have a bearing upon our own work, to make us not only willing, but eager to have light shed on them by discussions with wiser men. If you try, my dear boy, to find a wise man, and follow up discovery with exploitation, you will strike a rich lead.

Go then as often as you can to visit those whose society you naturally seek, your brethren in the clergy. Go to them as you would go to equals, or as I said

before, go as to those a little above you. Look upon all your brethren of the priesthood as upon men whose winning of the race takes absolutely nothing away from your own glory in winning it also. Get out of your visits all you can for the benefit of your soul and mind, without showing pretensions; but rather in a spirit of humility, manifesting a desire to learn. Let whatever trivial things arise in the conversations be considered only as a relief to the main body of the talk. Do not enter into acrimonious discussions, and if you find that one companion insists upon doing so, hunt up another kind of man for your next visit. The things you should be discussing do not admit of acrimony. Plan your visits, and look forward to them so that they may be profitable recreations for you. Invite your brother priests to your own house when you have one of your own. Give them of the best and make them welcome. When you grow older be especially kind to young priests, and the older you grow the more let your kindness to them increase. Put on no airs of superiority, even to those who are just out of the Seminary. Let them feel that they are received as equals; that they are within the charmed circle from the very moment of their ordination. Let all your talk with your brother priests be natural and spontaneous. You will not find it difficult to lead the conversation up to the highest plane, for the great majority want it to go there. We are merely a little diffident in making the first step. The best discussions always have a rather quiet and humble beginning. Cultivate good humor, and learn how to encourage it in others. I know a dinner club

of laymen that has no constitution and no rules, but a lot of maxims which to its members have the force of laws. One of them is: "When a member rises to speak, let him remember that ladies are supposed always to be present." Even the mythical presence of their wives and daughters keeps the talks proper. It ought to be easy for us to bring our own conversation to the highest level by remembering, that where there are two or three priests gathered together, the Great High Priest and Our Lady His Mother, are both in the midst of them.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

Three times have I tried to.....

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

ON THE GREAT SACRIFICE

My dear boy:

Three times have I tried to begin this letter, and three times have I failed. What is wrong? I thought that long ago I had prepared all these letters against the day when they might be put down on paper; yet this one, perhaps the most important of all, eludes me. It is not that there is a dearth of things to say. Not at all; there is too much. How can I pick and choose in such a garden as the Sacrifice of the Mass, about which I am to write?

But why should I complain of my dumbness at this point? Who has ever written of the great heart of our religion and said a tithe of what he wanted to say? Who has even yet touched the fringe of that sublime subject? To whom has language been given to eulogize the Mass adequately? All the oceans of all the planets, all the mountains of all the worlds, cannot rival the Mass in sublimity. All the beauties of God's countless creations are not together half so beautiful as the Mass. All the stories of earth are not so wonderful. Only the One Who instituted it can fathom the depths of the riches of a single Mass. None but He can know the power unchained by the poorest, the most unworthy priest who lifts the chalice. Why should I attempt to praise what could not be worthily honored

by a Te Deum of the Choir of Cherubim, sung at the foot of the Throne, to the accompaniment of the music of the spheres?

Shall I go back into the deep shades and recesses of history to find the glory of the Mass? I find glory, but not glory enough. I see Melchisedech with the bread and wine in his hand before the people of God; but I see also that his sacrifice was only a figure. I listen to the Prophet Malachy tell of the "clean oblation," the "sacrifice" in every place beneath the sun, the praising of the Name of God amongst all the peoples of the earth; but I know that it was only prophecy and promise. Far back in the history of God's dealings with men I follow the priesthood of the patriarchs, and smell the smoke of their sacrifices; but I know that these must pass away before the Mass which they prefigure. A majestic march of robed men greets me as I turn to the sons of Aaron and the tribe of Levi, sacrificing priests; but I know that both priests and sacrifices were merely shadows before. Of all these could I write; but who could write the glory of the fulfillment? Calvary rises, the world's Altar. Calvary's Victim ascends with the wood of the immolation. Calvary's Sacrifice fulfills all that was prefigured and all that was prophesied. The Great Sacrifice is made. The New Dispensation has its Priest and its Victim. It is an echo from the Last Supper that I hear steal out from the silence of that Death: "Do this in commemoration of Me." O God! my God! What hast Thou done to me? Thou hast made me a priest. It is to me that Thou art speaking. It is to me that this command is given. It is this

unworthy one who must take Thee in his hand; who must break Thee to Thy people. Once only and die, would be too much greatness; but he must do this act of commemoration every day, and still continue to live.

The Mass goes back to Calvary. Its liturgy goes back farther even that the Catacombs. Peter's chasuble is still preserved in the Church of Paris. Pope Clement, at the end of the First Century, saw a definite uniformity in the celebration of this clean oblation. St. Leo and St. Gregory associated their great names with the majestic rite of Rome; St. Basil and St. Cyril with the more beautiful rites of the Orient; St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Isadore of Spain left their mark on the setting of the Sacrifice. Each setting was all too unworthy of the jewel, whether it was Greek or Syrian, Armenian or Coptic, Roman or Ambrosian, Mosarabic or Gallican or Celtic. But what a wealth of beauty did each contribute, and yet it was not, it could not be, enough.

The Mass is the center of all our worship. It is more, for it is the compendium of all our history and Theology. It is the Tree of Life that Christ planted in the Garden of Paradise. As the planets to the sun so everything in religion is to this act of supreme Christian worship. And you, my boy, you are soon to offer it. You are soon to be of that ancient band of robed priests who march out of the dim background of the past, first prefiguring, then prophesying, then promising, and last of all, in the glory of the Resurrection, offering the culminating act of the world's worship.

It is the perfection of this Sacrifice of the Mass that

is the marvel of it. Men have always offered sacrifice. In them was the instinct for that great act of faith and dependence. They wandered over the earth, and away from the God of their fathers, yet they never wandered away from this need of their spiritual being. The very universality of the act is sublime, even though the rite of it often became degraded. In Israel how grand was the Holy of Holies, even in the desert; but how near to human perfection was the Temple that the Wise King builded for what he knew could protect only a glorious imperfection. Imperfect was the sacrifice of Israel, but its imperfection as a sacrifice was the perfection of the figure, the perfection of the promise of future perfection.

If this earth had a universal Emperor, to his seat of government as a center all eyes would naturally turn. About him would be gathered the signs of his rule and of his majesty. The dignity of all beneath him would be measured by their nearness to that throne and to his person, and by no other rule. Christ came to the world as its King. When Pilate wrote "King of the Jews" he wrote well, but he did not write all. The title should have read: "King of Men." Christ came to plant His Kingdom in all human hearts. By it and it alone could come the peace of God. In its center he erected His Throne; first the Cross of the Bloody Sacrifice; then the Altar of the Commemoration that continues it until the end of time. The panacea for pain, the cheer for sorrow, the cure for poverty, the solace for affliction, the key to mysteries, the answer to riddles, the knowledge of the centuries' yearning, strength for the

weak, greatness for the lowly, salvation for the wretched—these are found at the Altar-Throne of the God-Man. There is the center of this earth and of all created things.

To stand before that Throne facing the Living Presence upon it is the privilege of but one man—the Catholic priest. Before him is his God and behind him are God's people; nearest to both is he. His very position shows his leadership. He represents God to man and man to God. He speaks for those created to God's own image and likeness, created to serve and love Him for eternity. He does more than draw aside the veil for them. He places the King in His earthly Tabernacle. By the hand of His priest does Christ mount the steps to His seat of mercy and love.

Make for yourself this picture: The millions of men that were, that are, and that will be, stretching back to the sixth day of creation, and forward till the distance seems infinity; add to these the adoring angels, visible only to the eyes of faith; then all creation by its harmony making music. In the heart of it put the Altar of the Hidden God, and you, its lawful priest, standing before it, with your consecrated hands upon it. You are the one closest to the ever enduring miracle of His earthly Presence. It is this picture you should have before you every time you prepare to celebrate Holy Mass.

This is how a saintly man told me how to get great things for myself out of every Mass I celebrate. Here are his simple rules for saying Mass well: The best preparation for saying Mass is the silent prayer of

meditation. The most necessary virtue to bring with a stainless soul to the altar is the virtue of humility. But, in all humility, the priest must remember that the dignity of the Great Sacrifice should be shown in the dignity and devotion of his offering of it. His last thought of preparation encompasses a world in darkness awaiting the coming of the Living Victim. He must feel the hunger of that world even as he vests, for he is here at the table of the Sacrifice to feed that world.

When he touches the amice he thinks of himself as "another Christ." He puts himself in Christ's place to assume the garments and take up instruments of the Passion. There was a crown of cruel thorns for Christ. As a helmet against pride should the priest place the amice upon his head. The alb is white, for the blood-stains on Christ's robe did not detract from the glory of Him Who wore it. White it is on the priest to signify the purity he should possess to stand here on the new Calvary. It is also a reminder of the red stains that did not soil, but rather glorified the robe of the Great High Priest whose place he occupies. The cincture may be a memorial of the scourging for behold, it too is knotted as were the lashes. The love and mercy of a saint speak in the maniple, as the priest puts it over his arm and remembers the towel offered by Veronica to the Master. The stole will remind him of the cord that dragged our High Priest to the first Altar of Christendom. He lifts the chasuble over his head, and lets it settle down over his shoulders, as the Cross was lifted over the Head of Christ, and dropped down on

His back to test the last bit of human strength left in Him. The rest is the Way of the Cross. *"Ego volo celebrare Missam."*

Calvary is before the priest. He will go up its steps as he says the Introibo. Every action and prayer from that Introibo till the Canon is a step up. When the priest kisses the altar he is kissing the Cross; and each bending down to do it, marks one of Christ's falls from its glorious weight. Each prayer of Christ then was for His people. All these prayers of the Mass are directed to the same end. The washing of the hands takes the priest back to a scene in Pilate's hall of judgment. The flowing wine is flowing blood from Christ's wounded head, side and feet. The drops of water are the little mercies of man, so stingily given to Him. The Orate Fratres speaks of that night in Gethsemane, with its human appeal preceding its divine resignation.

The Secret is said as the priest touches foot to the Hill of the Sacrifice. Then, instead of a wail of sorrow, there is a song of triumph. I cannot read or sing that masterpiece of poetry and music, the Preface, without a thrill of holy joy. It is worthy of a choir of angels. We may well believe that thus they sang when the Son of the Living God touched foot to Calvary and His triumph. Thus shall the priest repeat the holy and inspired words.

During the Canon, he nails his own body to the Cross of Sacrifice. From the height of the elevated Cross he looks out over the "fields white for the harvest." These fields are his. He has a duty to each and every one of them. At the breaking of the Host he re-

solves to break his will to do the Will of God, by fulfilling faithfully the duties of his calling. At the Communion he unites himself to Jesus Christ so that both hearts may beat in a common zeal and love for God's children. When he covers the chalice he buries himself with Christ from the world and all its allurements. At the Blessing he arises with Him to the completion of His triumph in the Resurrection. When the last Gospel is said, he goes forth to announce His Word, resolved to preach it in every thought, speech, deed and action of a day so well begun.

My dear boy, there is only one parallel for the call that you have received in your vocation to the Christian priesthood. It was the call of Mary to co-operate in the Incarnation. Her call alone was greater than yours. But Mary knew and understood better than we do; so the world has the great Canticle of the Magnificat. Why has no priest since Holy Simeon given us an undying canticle? Why has no Christian priest given immortality to the outpouring of a heart overflowing with grateful love because of the dignity that is his? Simeon gave us the Nunc Dimittis because for an instant he was permitted to see the Child Jesus and hold Him in his arms. Daily do we touch Him in the Mass. Daily are we united with Him in Communion. We live with Him because we dwell so near His tabernacle. He goes with us to visit His sick and dying children. We give Him, the Food of Angels, to His famished flock. Why, then, are we lax and careless and thoughtless? Why have we not all sung a canticle of our own? It is because we do not get everything that God desires us to

have from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is because we do not say Mass as Mass should be said. You are beginning your ministry. You can learn from the sad lament I voice for my own lost opportunities. Alas! for my blindness. It was only after the long years that I could see and understand a little.

I am God's servant; yet at my command
He comes, my Lord, to rest within my hand.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

Gratitude is the rarest of.....

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

ON GRATITUDE

My dear boy:

Gratitude is the rarest of the beautiful plants that grow in the garden of the soul. God gives us the seeds but man fails to plant them, or if he does, fails to tend them. Gratitude is the least practiced of the virtues, though certainly it is one most to be prized. As a moral for stories, as an inspiration in poetry, gratitude ranks high; but in the life of this most strenuous and grasping of the centuries it is like the orchid, grown only under intense cultivation, or found in swamps seldom visited. Yet, if any virtue has a claim on the heart of man surely that virtue should be gratitude; for our total dependence on the goodness of God, and His infinite love and generosity to us, should make us value the impulse to gratitude as one of the holiest emotions of our souls. God exhausted the treasury of His goodness for man. The gift of His Divine Son to the brotherhood of the human race was a supreme act of generosity toward a creature who already owed Him life, freedom and the kingship of creation. If man had true gratitude in his heart he would never sin. It is as he neglects gratitude that he becomes a sinner. Saintship is gratitude intelligently shown in return for infinite favors, gratitude living on the highest spiritual plane. Gratitude to God is one of the secrets of holiness.

In a priest, gratitude should be the prince of virtues. A priest who has developed this virtue is sure of the success of all his work, for no virtue draws men in deeper affection to others than gratitude. No virtue makes us kinder, and no virtue is more powerful in bringing back kindness in return. Gratitude will disarm the worst opposition. It bears humility in its train. A word of appreciation has turned aside many a deadly blow, and brought peace where the battle clouds were gathering fast. Gratitude is as sunlight to the storm clouds, always bound to dissolve them no matter how black they may be.

I wish I could, from the lowly place of a simple priest, tell the superiors who direct and govern us how powerful would be their influence were they to strive always to manifest this virtue in their administration. The higher we go the more we take it for granted that any display of gratitude toward inferiors is a sign of weakness. It is quite the opposite. It puts a superior very high in the affection of those he is called upon to govern, though often, alas, because it is the unexpected. Who is a superior but one who depends almost entirely, under God, on what is done for him? Alone he has little force or power. If we only tried to realize how potent is the slightest display of the virtue of gratitude we might do many mighty things that today are left undone. We think ourselves very wonderful beings when we see things grow under our hands. No one on earth ever flatters us as much as we flatter ourselves. We may not throw the incense into the censer, but we are always careful to keep the coals bright and

ready. We take credit for the labor of others a thousand times more devoted, more zealous and by far more humble than ourselves, as a right due to us to whom nothing is due. The Valley of Josaphat is destined to be a valley of unpleasant revelations for many of us, when the mountains of truth shut us in, and, the Book of Self laid open, we read the record written by our own thoughts and actions long forgotten, because long closed by the seal of our vanity.

If we rightly understood the power of gratitude, even in worldly things, we would try, if only for selfish motives, to practice it; for it pays well everywhere and at all times. Talking one day with a Cardinal in Rome, the conversation turned in such a way as to include a certain Bishop well known to me, but not personally so well known to His Eminence. I at once expressed great respect for that Bishop. With a smile the Cardinal said: "Perhaps I can tell you why you esteem him so highly. He possesses a very rare trait of character. Once I had occasion to do him a small favor. I say small, because it was quite easy for me to do it; but it was not so to him, and he thanked me most gratefully. More than that: He never fails to write me each Christmas, always closing his message with a renewal of thanks for that small service. Now, I had done many greater favors for others, in each of which there was good reason for lasting gratitude. The recipients of these for the most part have forgotten. But this man, for whom I did only a small service, never forgets, and never fails to tell me so."

The Cardinal had guessed right, for I had had the

same experience with the same Bishop. I had really done him no favor. What he took for a favor was only my duty, but he has never forgotten; and even now, years after, he makes me feel that he is in no danger of ever forgetting. Incidentally, I might add that he is now far more than a bishop, though I am not making a point of that. Gratitude pays in better coin than advancement in dignity. It pays chiefly in esteem and good will as well as in grace. Lesser gains are included in the greater ones.

The fact that gratitude is so rare a virtue in practice gives it an unusual value when it does come to the front. Once an editor asked a friend what he thought about publishing a certain article that was a little out of the beaten track. The article was a good one, and the friend advised its publication. "But," the editor objected, "do you not think that my subscribers will resent a departure from what they have learned to expect from us?" "The unexpected has its value," was the answer. "The unexpected is a relief and an awakener of new interest." It is too bad that gratitude is not more common; but we are not forbidden, by practicing it ourselves, to take advantage of the fact that it is not, and thus reap a reward. When we act thus we are showing gratitude's power to others and, perhaps, encouraging them to try for the same benefits.

It might be well to consider some of the opportunities you will have to practice gratitude to your own profit. Think of what you owe your parents. As a priest they will look up to you, a fact that will make your every good word and action toward them of double value.

To make them feel that you appreciate how much they did to elevate you is to make them happier in you. Do not be stingy with your affection and with the expression of it. A grateful word is above riches. Do not ever make them feel that you no longer need them. Lean on them when you can do it without burdening them. They will repay you with what is better than the goods of this world. Your heart should never be locked up to your father and mother. The late Archbishop Quigley of Chicago, whose father was dead, had only one confidant—his mother. To all others he was dignity personified, a stern unbending man with a heart that gave the lie to his austere face. But to his widowed mother he was always a boy. He fled to her when the sternness became too great a burden. He let her feel always that it was she who had been responsible for all he had in this world. Her counsels were always taken as if they were the most valuable of all counsels. His mother was his greatest blessing in being his greatest relief from care. How happy he must have made her!

Think often with gratitude of your Seminary. Be good to it and all who direct it. Go there frequently to show your interest, and make little sacrifices for its prosperity. Part of your reward will be the good opinion of your old professors, and later of their successors. No good opinion is worth more to a priest, even in a worldly way, and no work deserves your good will more than the work of your Seminary. For you it is a second mother.

Every priest has had some favors from his bishop, but is tempted to forget them at the first disappoint-

ment or rebuff. Always remember such favors with appreciation. Do not be fulsome in your expressions of thanks, for gratitude and dignity can live side by side. A line at Christmas and Easter, a word of good cheer on his feast day, these little acts of thoughtfulness are better than apologies and flatteries, and they pay well. No superior is hard enough not to soften before a genial and grateful soul. Human hearts are all cast in one mould, by the Hand of a Kindly God.

Be grateful to your curates, when later on you have curates. There is one form of gratitude all powerful with assistants. It is the placing of responsibility on them. If they are not pleased and bettered for that they are unusually poor material. Responsibility is the test. Once they have stood it, the reward ought to be more responsibility, as a sign of the pastor's appreciation and gratitude. The addition of an encouraging word is always welcome. I know a pastor who is loved by few outside his parish and his household, but in both these places he is almost worshipped. "Why?" I asked one of his assistants. "Because," he answered, "the Skipper is the kindest of fathers to us. He makes us work, but he also makes us feel that it is our own work that we are doing. He seeks excuses to show appreciation for good service; and, as a result, each of us is always ready to help him. We take care too that the people of the parish learn what manner of man he is." Think a bit over the last sentence. A pastor's best reliance for the affection of his people is quite often the whole-hearted recommendation of his curates. I have never seen it otherwise than this: that the pastor who

has won his curates to his side has at the same time won his people, for it is the curates who go most amongst them.

Do we owe our people no gratitude? Few priests would say that. They know very well how much they owe. I think that it was Juvenal who said: "Beneficium accipere libertatem est vendere—To accept a favor is to sell one's liberty." Perhaps that is true in a general way; but it is not true in the relations of priest and people. Still, there is a lesson in the application of the saying to the priest who receives generously from his people. He really does, and ought to sell one kind of liberty in return for a favor—his liberty to be ungrateful. What if we are an underpaid body of men; we have riches that others do not know. Would any of us exchange the love of his people, especially of the children, for the salary of a fashionable city preacher? We do a little and receive a wealth of appreciation for even that little. I stoutly maintain that a priest gets more with the least effort than anyone else in the world. It is easy for a priest to be popular. When he is unpopular it is because he does not do even a little to avoid unpopularity. His sure road to popularity is the road of gratitude. He need not cringe to be on it. A few dignified words will do. A farmer's wife once raised a special turkey for my Christmas dinner. I went out of my way to thank her, and behold, what was intended only as an event became a custom which she handed down as a legacy to her children for my benefit and that of my successors. I thanked a parishioner once with the gift of a copy of "The Faith of

Our Fathers," which cost me a quarter, because he had come to tell me of a fallen-away family that I did not know had moved into my parish. After that every one within the sound of his voice was alert to help me seek out the lost sheep. It was not that they wanted a gift, but that they knew what pleased me. My gratitude manifested in that one case was responsible for bringing quite a number of these lost sheep back into the fold.

It is so very easy to show gratitude that I often wonder why we priests do not use that powerful instrument for good more than we do. A short visit goes a long way. To take passing note of a kindness is to multiply the pleasure of it many times over. Gratitude is one of the marks and signs of a gentleman, for it is a mark and sign of a refined character and a kind heart; and every priest should be a gentleman.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

One of my old professors.....

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

ON AMBITIONS

My dear boy:

One of my old professors in college was "Father Charles." I remember him best for his evening talks to the students, talks that often contained many of the elements of surprise that make talks interesting. One evening Father Charles said: "Always aim at a point higher than you really wish to go. If you want to be a lawyer aim at being a judge." One of his hearers interjected: "But what about those of us who want to be priests?" Father Charles did not hesitate an instant about his reply. "Aim at the bishopric," he said. It may be interesting to mention here that Father Charles himself was one of the last we thought might arrive at a bishopric, as he certainly was the last from whose lips anyone expected an advice at variance with the accepted traditions of the spiritual life. No one who knew him would for an instant think of him as an ambitious ecclesiastic.

What do you think of his advice? I am quite sure that you do not approve. Neither do you expect me to approve. Spiritual writers do not say kind things about the ambition for dignities, especially about the ambition for dignities that carry heavy responsibilities with them. The lives of the saints offer many examples of holy men who refused the mitre and crozier, even

of some who ran away to avoid what they thought was a danger to their souls. I think it was the great Baronius who was made a Cardinal by compulsion, and against the wishes of St. Philip Neri. Shakespeare well interpreted the admonitions of masters of the spiritual life when he put into Wolsey's mouth the words, "I charge thee fling away ambition." The mind of the Church seems to be in opposition to Father Charles' idea, even in spite of St. Paul's word to Timothy: "He who desires the office of bishop desires a good work." (Tim. iii:1.) The office was surely awork in the Apostles' day. To desire it then was to desire the hardest task in the priesthood, and the certainty of martyrdom. St. Paul might have worded his lesson somewhat differently had he lived through the Middle Ages. We get very little solace for ecclesiastical ambitions out of St. Paul, and practically none at all out of those who comment upon him. The Church has a frown for those who are known ardently to desire the Episcopate.

It must be admitted, however, that the experience of the world is not in accord with the Church on this question of ambition. That is not strange, since the Church is very regularly against the world. But should we wisely set aside the lessons of human experience? What is more important, do we? I shall not attempt to answer the second question; but very boldly say in answer to the first that we should not. We are in the world and we have to fight very often with the world's weapons. Our present duty is to men of the world. These men have their accepted standards. Success plays no small part in attracting them. They have deference

for rank and power. We must recognize that. The Church has recognized it, else why the ornaments of the sanctuary and the steps of the throne. The world knows at least a lot about human nature.

It seems then that there must be some golden mean between the experience of the world and the admonitions of the Church on this subject of ambition. There must be such a thing as legitimate ambition to plant and foster in the hearts of all priests, especially the young; and the Church is an adept at finding the safe middle ground that takes the best in human nature and raises it to the plane of the spiritual. Ambition is based, of course, on a certain pride in one's own power. Such pride is not reprehensible if it recognizes that our powers come from God, and seeks only to appreciate the gifts by using them to the best advantage for the Giver. There is good pride and bad pride. One is fruitful and one is barren. There come to my mind some verses from Lionel Johnson's "A Dream of Youth":

> "Upon a morn of storm, a swan,
> Breasting the cold stream, cold and wan,
> Throws back his neck in snowy length
> Between his snowy wings of strength;
> Against him the swift river flows,
> The proudlier he against it goes,
> King of the Waters! For his pride
> Bears him upon a mightier tide."

Pride, when it is of the legitimate kind, is a strength developer. Legitimate ambition depends on legitimate

pride. Legitimate ambition fixes a worthy goal. If it is a practical one it is the urge upon us to improve ourselves, to work hard and to keep our minds and hearts on the task we set out to do. We cannot decry that sort of ambition nor that sort of pride.

How does all this constitute an *apologia* for Father Charles' admonition that he who desires to be a priest should aim at the bishopric? I am going to preface my answer by reciting some of the qualities the Church demands in her bishops. It is required first that they be men of piety. After that follow the other qualities so eagerly sought after. They must have given evidences of solid, if not brilliant, learning; well tempered zeal for God and religion; good administrative ability; not led by extravagance; sober in disposition and in judgment; kind in relation to others, but not at the expense of justice to manifest duty; charitable to the poor and the afflicted; possessing the world vision of the Church Catholic so as to avoid the selfishness of parochialism. These are some of the qualities looked for in one who is of episcopal timber.

Now the Church does not always find it easy to secure even priests so richly endowed, and, consequently, does not find it easy to select her candidates for bishoprics. I would be a foolish and incurable optimist if I said that the Church has always succeeded in finding candidates who possess them. So rare is the combination in one man that it is seldom enough we find all these qualities even in those who have reached the episcopal throne. Yet what does the Church ask but that which she has a right to demand for her priests?

Are we not all selected for possessing at least the foundation of such endowments? Are we not all carefully trained, first to bring them out and then to build upon them? Of the bishop it is only expected that he shall possess them to a greater degree than others. But they are the ideal endowments of priests as well as bishops.

Father Charles did not say that we should desire the dignity of the episcopate. What he did say was that we should aim at the bishopric in order to be successful priests. He did not then counsel us badly, for he did not counsel us to have the episcopate as the aim and object of our lives. He meant that we should set out to secure for ourselves the qualities and endowments that are required for the episcopate. I knew him too well to think that he meant anything but that. He wanted his boys to be fit for life's work, and he knew that the best way to arrive at that end was to urge them to perfection. He was right. Father Charles was not what the world calls a learned man. But he had wisdom in him that he got from another source than the font of the world.

My dear boy, I am going to follow the example of Father Charles and urge you, who so anxiously desire to be a good and useful priest, to aim at being ready for a higher place. If this is advising you to be ambitious, I cannot help it, for I want you to have that kind of ambition. If your mark is set high, you will be all the surer of being a true and effective priest. So I am giving the best of good advice for your own individual success and happiness, and more: I am giving

you the advice that, if followed by all young priests, would inevitably result in raising the standard. I have no patience with the sneers thrown at every young priest who tries to make something better than the ordinary out of himself. We are too prone to tear down, to try to bring the tall things to a dreary level of mediocrity. It is easy to sneer, but it is not easy to emulate; so the sneer often comes as an excuse for a lack of the spirit of progress. I should like to have every priest, young and old, look up to a goal of great usefulness; one worth attaining by an honest endeavor to be fit for it. Then we should have a really great priesthood, a priesthood pious, learned, humble, zealous, wise and charitable.

But there is more to say: If we had the legitimate ambition planted in all priests to make themselves fit subjects for a call to work in higher places, we should be sure, not only of a great priesthood, but also of a great hierarchy. It ill becomes us priests to criticize what we have, when we do not try to make ourselves, who are the trees out of which the tall pines are selected, as worthy as we can. A lumberman can tell at a glance what forest is going to give him the best grades of timber. If the whole forest is full of graceful, straight trees, he knows that some will grade even above his needs and desires. The better we make the whole body of the priesthood the greater will be the select of it. What is true of the trees, is true of any body of men, is true of everything.

In every diocese there are a few men who stand out, and they are quite often referred to even by their fel-

low priests as "episcopal timber." Some of that timber is never cut, but it is always there if needed. Who are these men? Not always the most learned, but never lacking learning; not always the most pious, but never lacking holiness; not always the best administrators, but never lacking administrative ability; not always the most careful, but making few mistakes; rarely specialists in anything, but always sane and well balanced in general knowledge and culture. Too much learning makes a bookworm, and a bishop with his nose always in a book is not likely to smell fire in danger. Once the Conclave determined to elect a saintly hermit to the Papacy. He built a cell for himself in a hall of his palace, and resigned none too soon. Good "fists at figures" too often lack the imagination that saves a situation. The over-prudent servant who received one talent buried it in the ground and was condemned. Specialists are excellent professors and do splendid research work in laboratories, but often they have ingrowing minds. It is a judicious mixture of many good qualities, none of them over-balancing the others, that makes the outstanding man in the ranks of the clergy, the man ready for an emergency call, for a step forward or backward. I should like to feel that you are going to be that kind of man. I want you to try to be that kind of man; not because you may profit later on through advancement in dignity, but that you may profit later on by a constant increase in power for whatever good work God gives you to do. If I saw in you the makings of an ascetic, I should have advised you to enter a monastery. If I recognized in you the talent and will to be an

"ologist" of some kind, I should have sent you to a great university. Had you shown signs of being any sort of specializer, I do not know what I should have done about it. But my task was easy with you, for you were just an "all-around" boy who grew naturally into an "all-around" man. You are good priestly timber now, and that is saying much in the way of praise. What you are going to make of yourself later only time, effort and the grace of God can tell. One thing is sure: you must do your level best to make your talents count for God. You must shoot up straight for the sun. You must be ready to be used as part of the floor of God's house, part of the roof, or one of its pillars if so He needs you. *Your business is to be there when He comes to use you, and ready to be used in any capacity, high or low; while remaining quite indifferent to place, or position, as long as what you do is what God wants you to do.*

I have no hesitation then in offering the admonition of dear Father Charles to you, my boy, and saying with conviction and fervor: if you would become a good and useful priest in the Church of God, by all means aim at being fit to be a good and useful bishop.

"What became of Father Charles?" I am sure you will not be satisfied if I fail to gratify your curiosity on that point. He became a bishop, but he is dead; which shows that, after all—but you can fill in the rest yourself.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

Some years ago.....

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

ON FOLLOWING THE MASTER

My dear boy:

Some years ago—I am afraid that means more years than I like to remember—a certain Protestant clergyman in Kansas published a book called "In His Steps." The book was probably the most popular and widely sold religious publication of that year. Almost every Protestant family in the United States, it seems to me, was possessed of a copy. There was nothing new about the idea behind it, for it really did no more than translate the sublime language of "The Imitation of Christ" into the modern dialect. But it proposed an important question: What would Christ do under each condition which confronts the modern man? After the World's Fair in Chicago the famous English editor, W. T. Stead, wrote a book called: "If Christ Came to Chicago." The Kansas clergyman enlarged on the English editor's idea, but both appropriated it from Thomas á Kempis; and both were charged with a certain lack of reverence, one in the selection of a title and one in his treatment of the subject.

I could never quite see where this lack of reverence came in. Christ was with us on earth to give an example as well as a revelation. He Himself said: "I have given you the example." Examples are for application. So I think I am within the bounds of due rever-

ence when I fly to the "Imitation," and ask you to work out, in the face of any situation you meet in your ministry, the problem: "What would the Great High Priest have done?" He lived our life, and therefore faced practically all the difficulties that we have to meet. If we cannot get the exact example for each particular case, it is easy to deduce it from others.

The priest should begin his study of the example given by Christ with the fundamental thing. Christ's greatest care was to teach and preach. He did that "in season and out of season." He used the Temple, and the Courts; but He preached also from the mountain top, down in the valley, in the house of a Pharisee, in the home of Lazarus, on the shore, from the water—everywhere. He never seemed to tire in His business of winning souls through the spoken word, and of giving the sanction of miracles and holiness to His teaching. He also used every means at the disposal of the orator, showing that He did not hesitate about employing human gifts to announce the Divine Message. He pleaded, threatened, prayed, reasoned, persuaded. He even told stories to illustrate His lessons. Why? Because He was addressing Himself to the need of the hour. He was founding His Church, and giving to its ministers the example that later they were to follow. He was clearing away the obstacles that their timidity would inevitably place before them. He avoided the things that He wanted them to avoid. He did the things that He wanted them to do: announced His truth, and sustained it by His infinite power and His infinite charity.

It is interesting to speculate on what Christ would do at the present day had He remained so long in human form amongst us. Would He, for example, have built churches, schools, hospitals, orphanages and universities? Undoubtedly, yes. He would do all these things. He might even have written books and published papers; for He would take all proper means to reach the hearts and souls of men. If churches and other institutions had been needed for that purpose in His day, certainly He would have built them. Yes, and He would have begged the money, as we do, in order to build them. But a more interesting question presents itself. Would Christ build the magnificent churches and institutions that we are attempting to build today? I think I shall have to distinguish. He certainly would not build them without considering whether or not this effort to save souls would be at the expense of a far more necessary one. It is safe to say that the Good Shepherd Who would "leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go out after the sheep that was lost" would not occupy Himself exclusively with ornamenting the fold of the ninety-nine to the utter neglect of the one; and it is all the more certain that He would not do so if the smaller part of His flock were in the fold, and the greater part outside. No, I do not think that Christ would occupy Himself, if He were here in bodily form, and personally governing His Church, with magnificence where magnificence is quite unnecessary, and where it is purchased by neglect of duty to the scattered of the flock. I do not think that the Lord Who was transfigured in all His glory before the Apostles, Who loved the magnificent

Temple, would object to the most worthy material offering His children could make to Him. But I do think that He would not want it in preference to precious souls.

You might object that individual priests have a duty to only a small part of the flock, and that the responsibility of "preaching the Gospel to every creature" falls under the care of the Vicar of Christ and the bishops rather than under that of the priests. To a certain extent you would be right in saying that. The first duty of a priest is certainly to his own part of the flock. But he also is a brother of the Great High Priest. He, as well as the Apostles, were addressed by Christ when He sent them out to all men. We must remember that the Vicar of Christ and His bishops are forced to rely upon their priests; and that a clergy which puts bounds to its zeal is a clergy that can only be compared, as a staff for the Truth, to a very brittle reed. Our great business may be a definite work given us to do; but we are not thereby absolved from obligations to the Universal Church. After all, we are not only priests, but we are Catholic priests. We cannot expect to bear the title with honor unless we take over its responsibilities also.

In this letter I am preaching our responsibility to the souls that are not directly given into our care; responsibility for the scattered ones of the flock, for those who sit "in darkness and in the shadow of death." We may, and we often do, ignore that responsibility. Nevertheless it is there, and we cannot round out a useful priestly life unless we realize that and act accord-

ingly. Every Catholic priest should, in some way, be a missionary to every one of the lost sheep that his charity can reach.

It may be objected also that the Ages of Faith were the ages of the great Cathedrals, and therefore that the clergy of those times did not find it necessary to do more, outside their parish work, than build and embellish the House of God. But the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages sprang almost spontaneously from the faith of the people, and were not built at the sacrifice of the souls of "the other sheep." The missionary work of that day called chiefly for the sacrifice of men. Missionaries could go out, as did St. Francis Xavier, with nothing but their cassocks and their breviaries and do marvelous things for the Kingdom. The material means they needed were supplied as far as it was necessary by the people of the evangelized land. The result is the proof of this. The successors of St. Francis in Japan, for example, where one of the most illustrious of them, Valignani, died after thirty-two years of apostolic work, left three hundred churches, thirty-two missionary houses, a novitiate, a philosophical and theological seminary, two colleges, a printing establishment, two schools of music and painting, and multitudes of smaller schools and hospitals for every kind of human suffering as a legacy to the newly-founded Church. It is quite evident from this that the missionaries of that day did great things with the means contributed by their converts, something next to impossible at the present time. Then it must be remembered too that the old missionaries of the Middle Ages and after, received a

certain support from the kings, sometimes for political reasons. So, if the people built the cathedrals with their own alms, and with the labor of their own hands, they none the less, through their governments, supported the missions.

Today all this is changed. There are no longer any great pagan countries abounding in wealth. Rather have the Christian countries drawn the wealth of the world to themselves. The countries and people that need conversion no longer have resources in gold and silver. Our mines of wealth are owned by Christians who do not dig into them for God's glory but for their own enrichment. The modern missionary goes into the abodes of poverty, sickness and sin. He cannot then rely for support on the people to whom he preaches. He must rely upon the zeal and generosity of those from whose midst he came. He cannot turn to the kings, for they have stepped down from their thrones. Governments no longer consider the missionary a necessity to sustain some foreign or colonial policy. They treat him as did certain nations in the late war, as an enemy to be gotten rid of. Modern missions are carried on in spite of governments, instead of, as of old, by their help and influence. But since the scepter has passed into the hands of the people, the obligations of the scepter have gone with it. It is the people who must now supply, not only the men and women who go out to preach and teach, but the money to sustain them as well.

If Christ were now upon earth living with us in human guise and visibly conducting the government of

His Church, what would He do under these circumstances? There is but one answer. He would lead us straight into missionary activity. He would tell us that, if we could not give magnificence to His houses without sacrificing neglected souls, He would willingly get along without the magnificence. He would point out that a chapel hidden in the wilderness, to which even a few of the lost sheep come, might be giving Him more glory than a mosaic-lined dome of marble. But when the missionary work is being done, the great dome is not inappropriate. Christ would not condemn us for doing well the things that are under our hands; but He surely would condemn us if, doing them well, we failed altogether in our obligation to the lost sheep. I do not think that any one can successfully deny that this would be the attitude of the Christ Whose every thought during His three years of active life was for the sinner and the ignorant.

I am thoroughly convinced that on the day and hour that you step from the quiet of the Seminary into the noise of the world, a great new missionary forward movement of the Church in America will have begun. All signs point to it. We have been a mission ourselves. We have generously received men and treasure from other lands, and have profited by both. The wealth of the world is now within our borders. Education amongst us, and therefore responsibility, has grown with the growth of our Christian civilization. We have a devoted and a willing people who love the Name of Jesus Christ. We have courage and virtue in those who offer themselves for the priesthood and the religious

life. In a word, we have the men and women, the knowledge and the wealth, the foundation of zeal and the actual possession of the virtue of generosity. Some of these things we have in far greater abundance than other peoples. Besides, we have heard the call. It has been sounded by our Hierarchy, and blessed by the Vicar of Christ. We are invited to emulate the Apostles who have gone before. We cannot all answer that appeal in person, so far as the actual doing of the work here and abroad is concerned; but every priest amongst us can be a missionary, because every priest amongst us can set aside parochial selfishness and do his little bit to win supporters for those who go to preach the Gospel in our own and other lands. Let us not forget that "the Greeks are at our doors," and look first to our missions here in America. But this street that we call the world is narrow and there are others in spiritual want besides those at the door. They are within sight of our eyes and within touch of our hands.

We have come upon the days when we priests of America must have vision, the vision that blessed the eyes of Peter and of Paul, of Xavier and of Dominic. We are touching the fringe of the golden age of the Church. We are almost in the times of the "Pastor Angelicus" and the revival of the Ages of Faith. "Fides Intrepida" is its John the Baptist. All signs are blessed ones now. We have done well all that our hands have touched in the past. We have interested ourselves in the woes of the world, of every kind. No cry of physical distress has failed to move us. But there is a cry of spiritual distress that has a greater

claim. It comes from our door as well as from the mountains and plains of the distance. It is not Rachel crying for her children and uncomforted. Rather is it Christ weeping over other cities than Jerusalem, cities dear to His Sacred Heart. Who will hear if our priests fail to catch the echoes from a world in darkness praying for light? Who will go into the "lanes and byways" if we neither enter them ourselves nor send others in our stead? "Behold the fields white for the harvest!"

My day is in its Vesper hour, dear boy. Yours is in its aurora. Even the light of its advance tells me of its coming glory. God grant that its setting may be for you, and those who live it with you, a red splendor caught from the Precious Blood redeeming all the children of men.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

Yesterday I went out to enjoy.....

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

ON CHARACTER AND THE DUTY TO RULE

My dear boy:

Yesterday I went out to enjoy the only dignified exercise that seems left for an old man, a game of golf. With the thought of today's letter in mind I asked my more youthful companion, who it must be admitted is still in the novice state about the mystery of the game, what was his definition of character. "To my mind at present," he said, with rather pointed emphasis, "a good player who will search to find the lost ball of his handicapped opponent, has character." Forthwith I began quietly to examine my golf conscience. I think that my opponent dug deeper than he knew. It is the disposition of a man under all circumstances that betrays his character. The golf field is only one of the testing grounds, but it is not a bad one. A policeman was sent by his desk sergeant to a certain street to "see about the disposition of a dog that had been struck and killed by a passing automobile." He reported: "I have made inquiry about the disposition of that dog and find that he had a very bad one." An evil reputation survived a tragic death. Without doubt it does also in humans. We often judge a man's character by his disposition, and we are rarely deceived.

Just at this point I put aside my writing to look up

the dictionary definition of "character." I found a whole column of definitions in the Standard. I liked a reference in the first of them to "marking or engraving, cutting, stamping, etc." But that was not quite what I was after. I found it in definition number five: "The combination of properties, qualities or peculiarities which distinguishes one person or thing, or one group of persons or things, from others; specifically, the sum of the inherited and acquired ethical traits which give to a person his moral individuality." Very good; but perhaps definition number seven might suit my purpose better: "Good qualities, or the reputation of possessing them; good reputation." I really need both definitions. Farther down the page, however, I note that a character is "a personage," so I shall hang a definition of my own on that hook: A person with character is one who, by the recognition of his special gifts from God and by the cultivation of them, becomes, by contact with his fellows, a blessing to himself and to them. This fits into my golfing friend's definition, does not at all antagonize the authority of the dictionary, and puts the situation on a more Christian basis. Besides it fits the ideal character in the priest.

You will please note the emphasis I put on the double necessity of a man of character blessing himself and others, merely by coming in contact with his fellows. A priest with character preaches just by being around. In fact his best sermon is himself. Many and many a time have I been astonished at the success of priests who were anything but eloquent, and often not even learned men. I have, I am sorry to say, been mildly

jealous of some of them; not understanding the source of their power any more than they understood it themselves. But the power came from character. When I understood that I set out to study them, and learned that the first indication of real character was *disposition,* meaning a cheerful one. Such a disposition makes people listen to the silent but effective sermons of the true priestly character.

No matter how profane my introduction, it generally lands me into Holy Writ, the font of wisdom; and I find myself thinking now of the saying of Ecclesiasticus: "The joyfulness of the heart is the life of a man" xxx:23); and again: "Rich or poor, if his heart is good, his countenance shall be cheerful at all times" xxvi:4). It is easy then to conclude that goodness, being at the bottom of cheerfulness, and cheerfulness one of the great indications of character, we get back to where we meet an old advice: "Be good and you will be happy," adding—and make others happy as well. "A fine character" is pretty nearly the equivalent in praise of saying of a priest that he is a saintly man.

Please do not think, my dear boy, that I am now about to extol the clerical wit and humorist. I appreciate wit and humor, but they are not signs of sanctity. I know the "funny men" too well to make any such mistake about them. Their painfully gathered collection of stories only too often would furnish ammunition for an *advocatus diaboli.* They are cheerful only in spots, that is, on occasions. The priest with character, the silent preacher, does not need the stories. It is not humor or wit that he has, but a happy disposition. In

spite of sayings to the contrary, it is not humor that is contagious, but cheerfulness, which is quite a different thing. I have spent many a pleasant hour with one former neighbor who could not tell a funny story to save his life; while I have bitter memories of "the wit of the diocese" who successfully played to the galleries, but was a tormenting grouch when the galleries had emptied. A man with character does not carry his stock of cheerfulness around in a note book, carefully tabulated according to conversations, or in a memory that might better be employed on the principles of his Theology. There, I suppose I have exhibited a lack of character in myself. Well and good, you may need the spectacle of a horrible example. It will not take a policeman to pass a verdict on my disposition. The only claim I have to a good one is that I cheerfully admit that I do not possess it. Perhaps that is why I am trying to do for you in writing what I should long ago have done by merely being around.

Now I would not have you avoid cultivating a bit of humor, or assuming a good disposition when you have seemingly valid excuses for a bad one. My own definition as written above specifically calls for the cultivation of the gifts with which God has endowed us. One of them is the disposition to be cheerful. In fact, everything about us is a constant invitation to cheerfulness, because everything about us is a constant appeal for gratitude to God. Trees, grass, flowers, mountains, valleys, prairies, cities, towns, hamlets; men, women and children—especially children— all, every one of them, are filled with lessons of God's love for us, and preach

the undying love we owe to Him. Yesterday I rested in the shade for ten minutes while that opponent of mine was searching for his lost golf ball. Here I again showed my deficiency. But how beautiful, in the great out-of-doors, was everything to my eyes. I was praying in my silent admiration. There is no day that has not its own peculiar beauty. There is no plain so barren as not to have its own special example of God's providence. There is nothing created that will not add to our stock of cheerfulness if we only take the trouble to look for the things to admire in it. Who was more full of holy joy than St. Francis when he preached to the birds, and who loved God's works more than he? We may not be holy enough to see a brother in the wolf and a sister in the snake, but that is only because we are not as St. Francis was.

Cheerfulness, however, does not mean weakness. If a priest cannot be cheerful without being a "sissy," he had better remain a grouch. Character calls for strength. It is necessary that joy and strength unite in the work of making character. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit," so says the Royal Prophet (Ps. 1:14). St. Paul follows with a prayer for those he loves, "That He would grant you. . . . to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man." (Eph. iii:16.) If this applies to all Christians, how much more so to priests? The foundation of strength is the foundation also of joy. "Through God we shall do mightily; and He shall bring to nothing them that afflict us. (Ps. lix:14.) We begin to cultivate

strength in humble prayer. We develop it in humble service. We perfect it in union with the Will of God. To aim at doing what God wills us to do is to rely on the Rock of all strength. It is that Living Rock that the miracle of grace strikes to find the gushing flood of fertility and usefulness for every priest.

Never forget that as a priest you are one of the "rulers of Israel." Your jurisdiction may be limited and made dependent upon another; but you are surely called upon to rule. The power of that rule is often greater than you know. Your word may be a guide to many who never give you a sign of their submission. The weary souls who seek direction often get it from one of your passing remarks. There is influence ever in your bearing and in some of your simplest actions. It is an old story but a pregnant one, that of the woman who, hearing a priest's sermon on the Real Presence, remained in the Church to see how he practiced what he preached. The little time the priest spent in prayer that night, when he thought himself alone with the Blessed Sacrament, was probably the great sermon of his life. He might have been born to preach it. People go to the priest with many troubles. They would not go to him unless they had recognized his power and his right to rule. There are times in the life of the least among us when we exercise a power greater than ever an emperor possessed. How seldom do we think of that?

I am convinced that the failure of many a priest has been caused by timidity, by not recognizing his power, by not acknowledging to himself his right and

duty to rule. Timidity before duty is one of the marks of a weak character. We see it sometimes in the way we face sins that are winked at by unenlightened public opinion. We are often hard on the poor drunkard, but very tolerant of the weakness of the "respectable citizen." If a city is filled with bribery and graft, is it not our duty to point out the fact that bribery and graft is stealing even to a worse degree, very often, than is open robbery? I know a great city cursed by such wickedness. It is rampant in its government. Every branch of its building trades is run on lines of graft. No contract can be given with any assurance that there has been fair competition for it. Walking delegates of labor unions must be bought off to get work done on time or done at all. Estimators always figure on a fixed percentage of graft. Yet the chief grafters are members of semi-religious lodges boasting of their moral teachings and power for good. Our own grafting contractors, seemingly ignorant of the teachings of the Church, sit, Sunday after Sunday in the pews, and even approach the Sacraments. Dishonest delegates may be members of Church societies. What is wrong? You may say "poor human nature." I make all due allowances for that; but our people have never been known for hypocrisy. They are often ignorant of the truth. What "is done" is right for too many of them. The whole graft system has now gone through our governmental and industrial life. But the business of the priest is to apply the Commandments and the Church's teaching to life in all its phases and all its conditions. Do we do it? Do we rule here where we

have a manifest duty to rule? We do not. Are we afraid? I fear that often we are. Under such conditions, every Catholic pulpit should thunder the truth, applied with charity but firmness to the festering wound of society. Never mind if the politician is good to the poor. The poor can get along without stolen alms. Never mind if the "big contractor" has a generous hand when he writes a check for his Christmas offering. The Church did not become bankrupt even when greater than he deserted her. Never mind that the priest may be charged with enmity to Labor or to Capital. Labor and Capital have no right to be thieves. Why tell the little lad who comes to confession that petty stealings from his mother's pocketbook are sins, or the reformed burglar that he must make restitution, if we fail to try to reach this special sort of sinner? There were two thieves crucified with Christ. One was the humble penitent who asked mercy. The other was the sneering youth who thought that he did not need it. I sometimes wonder, when I meditate on the Passion, what timid priest in Israel was responsible for that Impenitent Thief.

We cannot get away from our duty to rule. We cannot escape responsibility for being silent when we should speak. Bishops are involved when they fail to use their right to rule, and to impose speech on their clergy. Priests are involved if they do not use their voices for public as well as private morality and honesty. I think that Tennyson was writing for us as well as the rank and file of humans when he said:

"One still strong man in a blatant land, whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one who can rule and dare not lie."

O yes, I know that we do not lie. But the tolerance of evil is akin to living a lie. Christ was not afraid to scourge the money-changers from the Temple, or to call the Pharisees "whited sepulchres." We may not be called upon, in these times, to apply a whip to the backs of our money-changers; but there never was a time in history when a stronger obligation rested on the Christian priesthood to apply the scourge of God's eternal truth to the blatant evils of a money-grabbing age and people.

Almost as bad is present-day political corruption. Like Tennyson, I care little for titles in rulers. I find democracy a comforting thought. I have seen and noted its success here. Yet, I do not close my eyes to some of its results. Since all power comes from God I can see the advantage of my not taking any more than I can avoid of the responsibility for it. Democracy saves the king to pile responsibility on the peasant. Well and good, if the peasant realizes it, but does he? "What is everybody's business becomes nobody's business," yet we boast it is the business of every citizen. Every Citizen, personified, fails to realize that. He remains in the content of ignorance. But it surely is our business, the business of Christian priests. We need not be politicians in being willing to be statesmen; for a statesman, a true statesman, is concerned with the

great underlying principles of government, while the politician is chiefly concerned about the men who are selected to apply them. By right of his calling every priest should be a statesman. He is in possession of the true principles, or he has failed in the end toward which his studies and training were directed. If he acts the statesman he need never descend to be the politician. I admit that he is out of his place as one, but he is in the place Christ called him to occupy if he is the other.

There, I have gotten away from my subject. No, I have not. I have said what I wanted to say. The priest who drives straight down the way of life toward the flag that marks its ending, yet who, without sacrificing the care of his own soul, shows kindness in strength, and cheerfully seeks to help the world, the state, his flock, his neighbors, who realizes his duty to rule and does it, he, my dear boy, has character.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

The General of an army.....

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

ON OUR GENERAL

My dear boy:

The General of an army is very far away from such officers as come into direct contact with the men. Many of them rarely see him at all; but they are obliged to render obedience to him, to confide in him and to work always under his direction. In the great Army of the Church Militant we are in the same condition. We do not see the General unless we make a very special trip to headquarters for that purpose. We get no particular personal directions from him; he makes known his will to us only through others; but we must confide in him and obey him. If we do not we are failures and we betray the cause we are supposed to serve. Our General is the Pope, or, as we know him best, the Holy Father.

There is something about the relations we have to our General that ought to make it very easy for us both to respect and to obey him. The General of an ordinary army may make a mistake at the great critical moment, and the cause is lost forever. It is not so with our General. When the great crisis comes, we know that his voice is the voice of God through His Church for the preservation of His people from error and sin—the voice of God Who will not see His cause destroyed. Christ has promised to keep His Church safe until the end of time. So for us there is a very

special reason for holding our General in reverence, for thinking of him only with love and respect, and for seeking occasion to show our obedience. We can have confidence in him most at the decisive hour.

In a very special way we are officers in the Army of God, watching for special opportunities to serve Him. It is by finding and taking advantage of such that we share in the force implied by Christ's own words, addressed to His Apostles: "He who hears you hears Me." We could very well apply them thus: That the priest who loves, respects and obeys the Vicar of Christ is showing love, respect and obedience to Christ Himself. When the children of Israel were unwilling to serve God, He gave them a lesson in captivity. He put them under the King of Egypt. "They shall serve him," He said, "that they may know the difference between My service and the service of the Kingdom of the earth." (2nd Paral. xii:8.) There is a threat to us implied in these words. We must be in service, and if we are not willing to serve God under His divinely appointed representatives, we may be perfectly sure that we are not going to escape service to a creature. Cardinal Wolsey is, perhaps, one of the most strikingly sad examples of this that history places before us; and Shakespeare has well translated the Cardinal's thoughts after his fall. There is terrible tragedy in his words to Cromwell: "Had I but served my God with half the zeal that I have served my king, He would not in my old age have left me naked to mine enemies." I do not need to see a stage representation of Wolsey to visualize that broken old man who had surely served

his king better than his God, whose loyalty to the Vicar of Christ was none too great, and whose awe of his king rather than of his God caused him to waver at a critical moment and thus lose England to the Faith. I blame Wolsey for that loss much more than I blame Henry. Henry was bad enough. He might later have done all the things he did in Wolsey's day to separate his country from the See of Peter. But I keep wondering if he would have acted when he did, had Wolsey remembered that he was first a priest, and only secondly a courtier to the King of England. There are many places in history, my dear boy, where we especially note that the essence even of worldly wisdom is the truth of Jesus Christ. We serve all things best when we serve God best.

A very common quotation from the Gospel of St. John is this: "The truth shall make you free." A less common one, but not less striking, is from Proverbs: "The lip of truth shall be steadfast forever." A better known one is from St. Paul to the Ephesians: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice." (Eph. iv:14.) All three of these texts most eloquently tell us that the one great reliance we have is Truth; that we need have no fear if we stick to it; that it is our sure defense in every fight and the absolute gauge of victory. In fact, my dear boy, whenever we make a failure in our work as priests—which is God's work— it is because in some way we are disloyal to the truth. We let human respect, which nearly always is akin to error, get the upper hand. We begin by being apologetic, and we end by being

disloyal. St. Paul has a censure for those who "Seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's." (Philip. ii:21.) Only too often we forget the things that are Jesus Christ's for our own quiet and contentment. Then we get neither quiet nor contentment. Why should we? No one is entitled to a reward for implied disloyalty.

It has pleased Our Lord and Master, Christ the High Priest, to give into the hands of one man the earthly leadership of His Army. It has pleased Him to select Peter, and by His prayer to His Eternal Father, to make Peter the bulwark of His earthly Kingdom. It has pleased Christ to make the increase of that earthly Kingdom depend upon Peter's successors; and it has pleased Him still further to endow them with such powers and such graces that " the gates of hell shall not prevail" against the Army that they command. Never was there a general of an earthly army so endowed. Never was there a general then who could be followed with such confidence; never one who has more right to the fullest obedience of his followers. Loyalty to him, love for him, respect for him, obedience to him, these come very high up amongst the virtues that should adorn a good priest.

If America gave the loyalty of her soldiers to Foch, the Church has a right, for stronger reasons, to command our loyalty to the Pope. In Foch, the Frenchman was lost in the Generalissimo. Nationality is lost in the successor of Peter. Let us worry about the things that concern our work. Let us worry about making our own country good. Let us worry about

doing our share toward bringing all the world to God. We shall then have no time to gossip about lesser things. God does not for a long time permit anything to stand as an impediment to the carrying on of His work. If he has seen to it, as He has, that the Church is divinely preserved and divinely guided in her mission, we have a right to presume that He does not permit man to interfere long and persistently with the human means through which that mission is carried out.

Napoleon is set down by military critics as a leader whose success was based on his knowledge and use of artillery. I am no military critic, but I have read a great deal about Napoleon, and doubt the explanation offered for his series of astounding victories. Napoleon had, to a greater degree than any other general, the affection and confidence of his soldiers. The "old guard" had a dominant influence over the rest in his armies. They fairly worshipped their "Little Corporal." I think that Napoleon's success was due more to that than the critics realize. No one doubts in any movement the power of a leader who has the affection and confidence of his followers, especially of those who are leaders in a smaller way under him. The human side of the Church is no exception. We are officers in her army. We expect those whom we guide to follow us faithfully and confidingly. We may be surer of that fidelity and confidence if they note that what they give to us we give to the Pope and his bishops. Our own efficiency and power for good, our reputation for loyalty and sincerity, our right to affection and respect, depend more than we think on our

manifesting these same virtues toward the Holy Father, and toward those whom he chooses to help him in his super-human task of guarding the deposit of Faith and advancing Christ's interest unto "the uttermost parts of the earth."

The storms have now been beating against the Rock of Peter for two thousand years. Many times in that space of twenty centuries did they drive the breakers almost over it. Raging waters seek out the soft spots and wash them away. Each time the waves recede they carry with them some of the yielding earth. It is only reasonable to believe that what remains is more than ever staunch and solid. A witty old editor used to say: "When the Pope and myself are in agreement we are on the right side of the question." Yes, and the safe side; also, for a priest, the side of usefulness in his ministry and happiness in his calling.

When we are loyal to those selected by the Holy Father to aid him in his work of administration we are loyal to him; for they are his staff officers. He selects likewise his generals of divisions and brigades, the bishops. The loyalty we owe to the Holy Father cannot be dissociated from the loyalty we owe to those he himself has placed in authority. No soldier worthy of the name gives loyalty to his general and, in the same breath, refuses it to his colonel or his captain. The Church is one. Obedience and loyalty are not, of course, the *supernatural* cords that bind her members together, for her unity comes from God. But they are the human response to a divine commandment that gives the Church strength to increase her influence amongst men,

and to advance Christ's cause to the ends of the earth. To realize the value of loyalty and obedience think what would be the result if we failed to give it. "Everything is military," Chesterton writes, "in the sense that everything depends upon obedience. There is no perfectly epicurean corner; there is no perfectly irresponsible place. Everywhere men have made the way for us with sweat and submission. We may fling ourselves into a hammock in a fit of divine carelessness. But we are glad that the net-maker did not make the hammock in a fit of divine carelessness. We may jump upon a child's rockinghorse for a joke. But we are glad that the carpenter did not leave the legs of it unglued for a joke."

All things in this world are interdependent, but the great responsibility rests chiefly upon religion. If religion were taken out of the world the life of man would not extend beyond a few generations, for the tendency of mankind is to destroy itself. Take away the restraint of religion on the passions of anger, pride and self-love, and man immediately begins to kill himself by wars. Take away the religious restraint on his animal passions and he immediately begins to destroy himself by race suicide and the diseases consequent to unbridled license. Humanity is like a procession passing in the dark along a road winding through quicksands and swamps. As long as we follow the path itself all goes well. We even have freedom to jump off the road if we wish; but the penalty for doing that is death. We must follow the guide if we desire to live. Religion is the guide, and the Church is its voice, giv-

ing directions for the safety of the travellers and calling out warnings to save them from death. The strength of that voice and the truth it speaks are both from Christ. The Church depends upon us priests to protect the dangerous sides of the path and warn the multitude; but we are part of the multitude, too, since we are walking with it and are subject to the same dangers. If we do not obey the voice many will surely be lost. Indeed, the loss of only one may ultimately mean the loss of thousands.

The kind of loyalty and obedience that we owe to the Holy Father, and those who surround him, calls for intelligent as well as zealous service. Here is where too many of us fail, and the reason we fail is because of the tendency in humankind to trust too much to its own lights and powers. The basic teaching of Protestantism is the teaching of the infallibility of the individual. To it, Simon called Peter is not a Rock, but a whole stone quarry, already dashed into millions of pieces by an explosion.

Intelligent service does not call for too much intrusion of ourselves as individuals. There is every opportunity for the exercise of our intelligence within the safe limits of truth. A few days ago I read some of the letters of the late Franklin K. Lane, former Secretary of the Interior. He touched upon the fascination exercised by the Catholic Church over him. He confessed how pleased he would have been had he been able to accept the Catholic doctrine. He even went so far as to congratulate a friend who had accepted it. But he confessed also that he preferred what he considered a wider

freedom. "I wish I could be a Catholic," he wrote, "and yet I cannot feel that once you have a free spirit it is right to go back into the monastery and shut yourself up away from doubts."

Mr. Lane was like thousands of others who do not understand what is meant by the words "The Truth shall make you free." Politically he understood; religiously he did not. He knew that the safeguards of the Constitution, which shut freedom within the boundaries of principles, are necessary to political progress and peace. But he did not see that this lesson came to him from a much higher source than a political one, and that, in the domain of conscience, where the moral law rules, it is of the very highest importance that freedom be exercised within the boundaries of the eternal principles of God's law and revelation. Every citizen of a state has freedom to violate its laws; but if he does so he incurs penalties, the worst of which is that he destroys instead of helping to build up. We have freedom to deny anything we please, but if we exercise it we place ourselves out of harmony with Him. Truth gives the only true freedom. The Church has it. Her earthly ruler is there to preserve it. We are ordained to help him. We do that when we obey him loyally. We cannot be good priests, we cannot be faithful guides, if we fail in that.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

When you come out of the Seminary.....

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

FITTING IN

My dear boy:

When you come out of the Seminary and begin your life's work you will soon discover that there is still some cutting and shaping to be done to fit you into this round thing that we call the world. The Seminary did not try to go much farther than taking care of the material and shaping its general contour. It could go no farther, even if its directors so wished; though I do think that it could make your work later on a bit easier. Seminaries, for example, pay little attention to training their students for public speaking. A sermon once a year will not do that. I often wonder that our young priests speak so well when such little effort is put to grounding them in the principles of an art they must practice often all the rest of their lives. I have always a feeling of profound pity for the young priest who is shoved into the pulpit two weeks after his ordination. When he has gotten through with his first stock sermon, learned by heart as a general rule, and has to face a congregation with nothing but "points" for his guidance, he begins his process of "fitting in" with a vengeance. The Seminary might have made that day easier for him by making some of his recitations take the form of five minute discourses, opened in formal style by addressing the professor and the "gentlemen" of his

class. Nothing better could be done to help him think on his feet and give solidity and form to his utterances. I tried this thing on school boys once, to their intense amusement and interest, but also to their profit. I understand that something better is now being arranged in our up-to-date Seminaries to cover this need. Thank God for that.

But I have done with talking to you about preaching. There are other things concerned in this work of fitting yourself into the world of which you are soon to form a part. I have already said that it is a "different" world. You are likely to run into its problems as they concern your priestly work in a very short time. One of them is poverty, which has many phases and must be clearly distinguished. Persons are poor when their income is not sufficient for a normal living, and persons are paupers when they receive aid for their support. So you can readily see that there are paupers who are not poor. Now a normal living implies a standard of living, and this obviously varies with country and time. Some people are paupers because they are feeble, mentally or physically, or because they are lazy or foolish; but these are only a handful compared to the host of the poor who have little to say about their poverty because they are the victims, often unconscious, of social and economic conditions. For the most part they are unskilled workers, who are forced to accept the wages and conditions of labor that are given to them; in consequence of which they and their dependents are in misery in spite of themselves. In normal times there are millions of such in our own rich country, and many of

these are our own people. Love of country as well as love of God should urge a priest to give some heed to this problem, not merely its relief by alms and rehabilitation, but also by studying the causes and, as far as he is able, applying preventive measures. This is a big subject. It brings you into the study of Catholic Sociology, a worth-while study for any priest. I wish there were more of us who paid attention to it. Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical on the Condition of Labor has given us the principles and the encouragement, which we have not heeded as much as the problems involved demand.

But we live in the age of what might well be called luxurious poverty, when people are hungry, not because they had not the opportunity of getting enough to eat or drink, but because they eat and drink themselves into losing what they had or could have. Extravagant tastes are all too common. General education, or rather general instruction, has placed the comfort mark pretty high on the economic thermometer. A poor girl now-a-days is one who cannot afford to buy silk stockings. A poor boy is one who cannot afford to treat the poor girl to an evening in a place where silk stockings only are welcomed. A poor man is one who cannot afford to marry in fear of the coming into his home circle of the aforesaid boy and girl. A poor woman is one who cannot, with her acquired tastes, afford to marry the poor man. It is not a problem of finding bread and house and raiment for such as these that faces you and the likes of you. It is a problem of getting a better dis-

tribution of that which buys what today is looked upon as a decent living.

It is a hard problem with which to deal. On the one hand is the fact that the world is not going to go back. We have dug in and there is no retreat. We must take the world as we find it, trying by religion to purify its aspirations and direct its new-found, but thinly-spread culture to the highest and best. We may modify but not change. We may keep it on a safe path, but we cannot get it to retrace its steps. Standards of living are higher. What was once frugal comfort is now dire poverty. What was dire poverty is now a danger to civilization. What is a danger to civilization is a danger to law and order. What is a danger to law and order is a danger to God and Religion.

We have, however, the ladder by which men climbed to civilization—the right of private property. We cannot permit theft and robbery, even to alleviate any form of misery. It was the exercise of this right of acquiring private property that developed the world's resources. To do that, combinations of wealth controlled by individuals became a necessity. So Capitalism was born, and so it thrives. We cannot afford to kill it outright or all will suffer. We dare not kill it or we shall kill Civilization with it.

Between poverty and riches stands the State; and behind the State is the Church—and you. If you tell the State to favor one side to the injury of the rights of the other, you are helping to destroy both sides. There must be an even balance. If you tell the State to take over to itself what is not its province to

have, you are only putting things nearer the hands stretched out on both sides to steal, ready to take and take until the balance is destroyed. A State encumbered with the goods of either side is a State that invites looting by the majority that rules by numerical strength, or by the minority that rules by craft.

When a State has taken over what belongs to one side or to the other, or to both, it is soon a stripped and slave State, the prey of special interests, destined to death or uselessness. Then the robbers inevitably change sides. If they were poor they become rich. If they were rich they are themselves robbed until they become poor. The development of national and world resources stops. Civilization stagnates with the stoppage of industry. The last state of the world becomes worse than the first.

There was a problem of geometry in the Euclid I studied as a boy, known as the fifth proposition: "The angles at the base of an isosecles triangle are equal to each other, and, if the equal sides be produced, the angles at the other side of the base are likewise equal." Coming so soon to a beginner, this proposition was called the "pons asinorum—the bridge of asses." It is proverbial how hard it is to get certain donkeys to cross a bridge. The "pons asinorum" of this economic day and age is the problem of the new poverty. The solution is a simple one, but not understood by the "asses." It is a logical one, but "asses" are not logical. It is a safe one, but "asses" bearing burdens keep their eyes down when they walk, as you may have noticed. Your job is to help those who have not given

sufficient intelligent thought to all these things to raise their eyes, forget their burdens and see green fields with Heaven's blue above them on the other side of the bridge. If they will not be logical, they can at least be made hopeful. If they cannot see the solution, faith can be put into their hearts. If neither hope nor faith will serve, there is always charity to fall back upon. But it is part of your job in life to find humanity at the bridge that men have reached by themselves, and show them how safely they may pass to the smiling fields on the other side. To do that you must fit yourself in, not by meeting railing with railing, abuse with abuse; not by insistence on theories you have only half thought out, but by knowledge of the problem, study of its special aspects to modern life, sympathy for those who are beset with fears or a sense of injustice. God's law and the eternal principles which you ought to know will do the rest.

I selected this problem of the New Poverty only as an example, though it is the most puzzling problem except sin that you will have to face. There are other things to be thought of in your efforts to fit in. I have been referring to them all through my letters. If you reread what I have written in the light of this they will present themselves on every page. But they are all to be taken up with the certainty that each can be worked out according to a set logical process. Your philosophy and theology are your axioms and postulates. It was to give you these safe guides that you were taught both these sciences. The Seminary gave you a compass, too. No matter how dense is the forest, how dreary

the desert, how stormy the sea, how overcast the sky, this compass will work unerringly. Men may not go by it when you tell them the way, but many will—enough to keep the world straight in the long run. Your business is to help in your own way to keep that world straight, not by what you think, but by what the One Who loves His creation, and especially His men of free and good-will, thinks.

Do not believe then that there is any problem of human life that you can afford to ignore in the process of fitting yourself in. Everything that interests men should have an interest for you, but you cannot allow yourself to be shifted from safety just because the crowd is jostling and all in it seem to have already decided on their course of action. Weigh well and get the habit of weighing. With the inspired writer get the length and the depth and the thickness. Learn to apply the tests and you will not go far wrong.

I might take up situation after situation and dwell upon each, but to what end? The process of fitting in is nothing but acquiring the habit of bringing the light of the Gospel to bear on every situation into which you will be thrown. I might again tell you that to fit in you must be neat in your personal attire and habits; but as a fisherman must be clad in oilskins on a stormy day, you will know that you must suit your dress and deportment to the occasion and the company. You will know that you cannot fight vulgar ostentation by being yourself vulgarly ostentatious. If you want to reach plain people with the plain Word of God, you are certainly not going to fit your discourses only to a group

of specialists. If you need to use examples to drive home a truth, you are not going to depart from the methods of Christ Who "spoke in parables" that men might understand. You cannot cure the evils resulting from social troubles by ignoring the science that others have gained by research and study. There are men who secured a great name for wisdom because they knew how to hold their tongues and look the part; but they never did much good. It is a fine thing to know when to be silent and when to speak. The time to be silent is when speech could not better things. The time to speak is when truth and the opportunity to announce it show themselves to you at the same time.

St. Paul told us to be "all things to all men." He meant that we must fit in under every condition we meet. He did not mean that we should be hypocrites. He did mean that we should be armed for every sort of combat. In the ancient days warriors covered themselves with steel armor. Today steel armor would be worse than useless in battle. The modern soldier equips himself with the knowledge of how far certain guns carry; how quick a shell will burst when it touches the ground; how much deviation a certain velocity of wind will give to a projectile; how strong a barrage is needed to precede an attack with bayonets. Once fighting consisted of going straight at an enemy and giving him hand to hand combat; but fighting now is different in warfare. So is it different in everything. To fight for God you must fit into the Army of God by faith, by prayer, by example, by knowledge, by study of tactics, by wise counsel, by devotion, by loyalty, by zeal.

But, as the good soldier never exceeds his orders any more than he fails to obey them, so, if you have made yourself really and truly to fit into your place as a priest, you will remember that battles are won by obedience rather than by conceit and presumption; by which I mean, that the length you go in your efforts to be useful should never exceed the limits placed on your action by legitimate authority.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

The two great priestly traditions.....

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

ON THE CHARITY OF JUSTICE

My dear boy:

The two great priestly traditions are charity and learning. They go naturally hand in hand. Of the second I shall write in my next letter; of the first I shall write today, for I did not feel that I had said all I wanted to say in my last.

There are certain families that set such great store by their traditions that they pass them, as a noble heritage, from generation to generation. The sacerdotal family has been thus favored. Its record of charity is the greatest on earth as well as the longest. You cannot go back into the history of man's love for his fellows without meeting Levitical names on every page. Some months ago I visited Mexico and chance threw me into the company of a party of very distinguished medical men from the United States. They were making a special stop at Guadalajara to inspect a hospital three hundred years old which, the leader of the party informed me, furnishes the most practical model for any hospital in a similar climate at the present day. This gentleman said that it was "the last word" in a hospital for the tropics, though three centuries old. "Who built it?" I asked. "One of your folks, a bishop," was the prompt answer. Everywhere I went in Mexico I found institutions of charity, now for a great part sup-

pressed or used by the State for other purposes, with nothing to take their places; but a priestly hand had built or a priestly voice had inspired the building of one and all. What is true in Mexico is true all over the world.

The great apostle of this charity of justice was Bishop Von Ketteler of Mainz. He saw a change in world conditions that was making poverty a problem rather of justice than of old time charity. He knew that the development of the world's resources to which I referred in my last letter would, if coupled with proper distribution, almost eliminate poverty as former times had known it. He threw himself into the struggle for economic justice, both to Capital and Labor. If he leaned more to the side of justice for the latter, remember that Labor was the weaker side. Von Ketteler tried to keep the balance true. He saw that, in the new industrial life of the civilized world, economic justice was needed as a fundamental religious virtue. If anything were necessary to prove him right, it is the result that followed his efforts; for, since virtue, like God, is diffusive of itself, his success in planting its ideal in men's hearts resulted in the rebuilding of Catholic life and the reinvigorating of Catholic activity. He found Catholic Germany weak and disorganized. He left it united and ready to face battle with the Iron Chancellor and defeat him. In no other country before the Great War had the Catholic body been welded together so compactly. The corner stone of its edifice of usefulness was laid by Von Ketteler in his battle for social and economic justice. Striving for one great goal, he won

many. Better still, Belgium and Holland, profiting by good example, achieved similar results. The long reign of power granted the Catholic party in the Kingdom of Belgium was not because its leaders were shrewd politicians, but rather because, striving for economic justice, they disarmed their opponents.

A philosophy of *laissez faire* is never a wise one. We had it in the Manchester economists. They did more than their share to bring about the evils of ill-regulated Capitalism. Any field will grow wild if it is not weeded. Of all the vices, greed has the greatest tendency to become a gross feeder. In the writings of those men religion was ignored, and the unhampered and unrestrained rule of riches encouraged. Precious as is the right of private property, it is not to be deified. When it is, the sacred rights of human beings are trampled in the dust. Low wages are not justified by the laborer's necessity of finding work. The luxurious poverty mentioned in my last letter is more than a decent living; but at the same time it is to be remembered that proper housing and nourishment, reasonable recreation and a chance to provide for old age and the education of dependents is not luxurious poverty.

There are evils that go with the poverty of this day of ours that put it out of the class of the poverty mentioned in Holy Writ and there commended. It is certain that the mass poverty of today is a breeder of lawlessness and crime. When the standards of living are high men strive harder and more ruthlessly to gain them. In the old days there was not so much difference between the actual comforts and food of rich and

poor. The mediæval baron sat at the table with his retainers. His family was made up of his servants as well as his children. Poverty was an individual matter. Today it is a mass matter. Once there was scarcely enough to go around. Today there is enough and to spare, but, as I said before, it fails to circulate properly. Once men had consciences because they had religion. Today, religion being weakened, especially in the wealthy, conscience has a halting voice to them. Refined crime has naturally increased among the rich to irritate the poor with its flaunting show of vice and luxury. Human nature is still human nature, and feels resentment. The unrefined brand of crime, cheap crime, is partially the result. In the old days poverty was not degrading. The Christian faith taught the nobility of it. Rich men like Francis of Assisi gave it dignity by embracing it as something which they might voluntarily accept as a choice; a thing for the sake of which they could lose their lives and find them. It is scarcely possible to do that today. There are now very few holy poor men. The haunts of poverty are the haunts of crime. Poverty, in the opinion of those who feel themselves poor, justifies taking what it can safely get; for the poor are convinced that their poverty is the fault of others, or rather of a system for which others are responsible.

It is well to remember also that the degradation which today follows poverty is very hard to overcome under present conditions. It brings degeneration in its wake as well as hopelessness. Bad housing conditions breed disease as well as crime. It is not a product of

rural life, but of the crowded cities. What good air made bearable because it brought good health in spite of hunger, bad air makes unbearable because, without hunger it reduces vitality and leaves the door open to the entrance of bodily ills. To secure the amusement that modern life calls for, the city dweller economizes in the wrong way. He crowds himself into tenements that stifle his moral life while making his body a fertile breeding ground for disease. He is soon trapped into hopelessness, and has neither the moral nor the physical strength to rise out of it. This condition is almost always an irreligious one. A ray of hope here is necessary to light the way to the Kingdom of God, but it is hard to kindle that in the heart which has been atrophied by the constant sight of sin and misery.

This is not a cheerful outlook for the young priest of today or tomorrow. He must face the fact that society has run to the two extremes: one is the wealth that breeds the long list of sins resulting from luxury; the other the poverty that breeds what the civil law calls crime. There are then the hangers-on, taking excursions into both dangers. The worst in Society comes out of the two extremes. Both do their share toward contaminating the middle class.

It is a mistake to say that "The Catholic Church is the Church of the poor only," because Christ said, "For the poor ye always have with you." The Catholic Church is the Church for all men because she is the Church of Christ. She has the living message that is the same for rich and poor. Once the poor were her favored children because from them came the great

body of her saints. That condition was not undesirable to the Church, which could better draw the rich because of the example given by the poor. Now there is danger that the poor will be alienated from the Church by the very evils of poverty which her message alone can make bearable. We cannot and must not lose that precious part of our legacy from the Master who lived in and loved poverty for its own sake. But this poverty was not the modern poverty. I fear that poverty as the world now knows it will never be noble again. The whole earth is too rich, for one thing. A few can hoard but cannot spend its treasures. We shall always, of course, have examples of noble poverty, but not from poverty in the mass. We priests must fight that; and if, in doing so, we must make a choice between the rich and the poor there can be no hesitation about our allegiance. We must be with the Carpenter and the Fisherman. But we need not be called upon to make such a choice, for, in urging justice and charity upon the rich, we do our duty by them. In properly, kindly and intelligently helping to force it, if refused, we stand by the poor. Our business is to keep the world from sin. Once we could do that fairly well in spite of poverty, or rather with the help of poverty. Now this new mass poverty nullifies our efforts and raises barriers to God's grace. We cannot stand by indifferent under such conditions.

Charity's best manifestation was always the spiritual works of mercy. Today the spiritual remain in their proper place, but the corporal approach nearer and blend with them. It is not bread that is asked of us now, but the service of advocating justice. It is in our

power to do that, once we realize how great that power is. Once we builded monuments to one kind of charity. We can build better and stronger ones today by lifting poverty out of degradation, and wealth out of the mire of injustice. That is why I urge you to resolve to help all men to practice the charity of justice.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

The trail of civilization.....

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

ON THE PRIESTLY TRADITION OF LEARNING

My dear boy:

The trail of civilization through the forest of human life has been blazed by devout men and women, most of them Christians led by their priests. Almost every tree is marked with the sign of the Book as well as the Cross; for one of the two great priestly traditions is that of learning.

Practically all the universities of the old world, founded before the end of the sixteenth century, and most since, owe their beginnings and early fostering care to priests. Priest-scientists were honored amongst the greatest lights even of the pagan Empire of China. Priests gave Japan her first taste of western culture. Priests began and carried on the first colleges and universities of the New World. Lima, Laval and Mexico have that story to tell. Priests introduced printing into America and published our first books. The long roll of light-bearers who were priests is our joy and our pride. It begins with St. Paul and lists the Gregories, Basil, Athanasius, Augustine, Jerome, Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Mendel, Stensen, Copernicus, Secci; outstanding figures—only a few names on a list that is interminable. Take out of the world the contribution of priests to its

culture and knowledge, and civilization would be a beggar in rags. If Father Campbell had done nothing more in his admirable work "The Jesuits," than show the contribution of but one body of priests to science, he would be entitled to everlasting gratitude. Yet that record fills but a few pages on the golden scroll. A library of the great books written by priests would put the lost treasure of Alexandria and the saved ones of the Vatican to shame. Without priests we should have lost the inspired poetic prophecies of Israel as well as the master models of the Greek and Latin classics. Aristotle sent his genius down the ages into our own time chiefly through the pen of Thomas of Aquin. Holy Writ found no greater commentators than Jerome and Bonaventure. No branch of science is without its debt to priests. Philosophy, medicine, law, geology, geography, chemistry, physics, botany, and all their sisters, would have much less to their credit, had there been no Christian priests to contribute to their triumph by fostering their early growth. Not even the professors and the teachers themselves can show a tradition of learning so high, so uniform and so constant through all the centuries of civilization. I say that to arouse the pride of the scholar in you; for, in arousing that, I am encouraging you to be a scholar. You are the custodian of a great heritage. Pass it on to your successors, enriched by your love and labor.

Love of learning logically follows love of God and neighbor. We cannot catch even a faint glimpse of God's infinite beauty without desiring to see more of it. To do that we must study everything in His creation;

for all bears witness to His infinite greatness; everything worships at the shrine of His perfections. Knowledge came first to man from studying God. It is pitiful to hear scientists of this day and age deny or cast doubt on His existence, when the whole world took its first steps in science under the leadership of His priests, who had discovered it by discovering new manifestations of His goodness and greatness.

Learning is nothing but the uncovering of the truth and works of God to the eyes of man. But St. Paul tells us that in eternity "knowledge shall be destroyed." Why then trouble ourselves about it? Because, while it still exists, since time is still with us, its mission, like all missions, is greater than itself. Knowledge as we have it is a step to the Beatific Vision that will replace it in Eternity. Knowledge is of the earth, but it is also a brightly marked way through the clouds to Heaven. Perverted it has been, and often still is; but the perversion of it is not knowledge, for the way of the perversion is the way of darkness. He who preaches "sermons in stones" is not man, but God, Whose Holy Name is written all over His creation. Those who read it in the veining of a leaf, in the course of the stars, in the gardens of the ocean's floor, in the ordered beauty of nature, like those who see and enjoy it in the study of the human soul and the marvelous workings of the human mind and heart, have opened the true treasures of knowledge to the world. These treasures die but yet live. They shall pass with time. But they shall be destroyed only as all created things shall

be destroyed—by being swallowed up in the immensity of Eternal Truth.

How ardently I pray that you may be one, alas of the too few amongst the priests of this New World, who honor greatly the tradition of priestly learning! Why do I say "the few"? Because the spirit of the times has affected us. Our old priests were forced by circumstances to be "brick and mortar men." Our young priests have suffered from the blindness of the age to the delights of study. We are in danger here of losing our precious tradition. If young men like you do not see that danger, it will surely be lost to your immediate successors. We cannot afford to lose it. I pray God that the young priests of my day will see to it that we do not lose it. The great and glorious treasure of the priestly tradition of learning is in their hands to increase or to bury out of sight.

Are you going to think me a petulant and grumbling old fogy if I complain against neglect of our tradition of learning by the young priests? Very well, I am willing to take the blame, if in accepting it I can stir up resentment enough to drive some few of them back to their neglected books. Why should it be necessary for an aspirant to the priesthood who loves learning to become a Jesuit, or one who loves preaching to become a Dominican? All the great preachers did not belong to the Order of Preachers, any more than all the scientific priestly minds found place with the sons of Loyola. The priestly tradition of learning is not entirely monastic, even if it be so for the greater part. It came less out of monasticism than it did out of the

Church on the stalk of which monasticism was a flower. It is religion and learning that go hand in hand. Who has more leisure to give to the cultivation of learning than the country priest? Who has had more incentive to snatch spare hours for study than the diocesan priest whose way was made smooth through college and Seminary by the Church that always loved learning? Gratitude to that Church, the desire to keep her light burning as brilliantly today as of old, the wish to be what the faithful old Mother wants her sons to be, these are urges strong enough for any good priest. When a young man is equipped for scholarship on leaving the Seminary and lets that equipment fall into disuse, he is very close to being an ingrate and a traitor.

Hard words? So they are intended to be. If hard words could change the present condition of contented indifference to study in so many of our young priests after ordination, I would myself be an ingrate if I failed to use them.

I should like to keep my appeal for preserving the priestly tradition of learning on the highest plane, but there is a warning to be given in this connection. Our people expect their clergy to keep in advance of themselves, and our people are traveling fast. There are large and growing bodies of Catholic students at the state and secular colleges and universities, while our Catholic institutions of higher education are every one filled to the doors. With every graduating class today educated Catholic boys and girls are entering active business and professional life. They want to be fed with solid food, and they want it served in proper

intellectual style. It is instruction they like from the pulpit, and indeed it is instruction that they most need. We must meet this new and critical audience with something better dressed than the homilies that I and the building priests of my day had to offer. We did our partial best with the time that was left to us out of a week given up to collecting and building. We acquired habits that are now hard to change; but our day is past or rapidly passing. We are leaving you the result of our work, but with it we are not leaving you our excuses. We have builded you out of excuses. The boys and girls we trained are now in college. They will remember us with affection because we gave them what we could give in school and catechism. What satisfied them as little children, however, is not going to satisfy them as educated men and women. They are your problem, not ours. If you are not going to rise to meet that problem, you are going to fail with the generation of educated Catholics we helped make and are leaving as a legacy to you. We faced the problems of our day. We had to work in the ditches to do it. Are you, called to work in the pleasant sunshine, not going to be as successful with your tasks as your predecessors were with theirs? The priests of tomorrow will fail if they are not men of study. The Church cannot abdicate her intellectual leadership. If she does, we are in for an age of shallowness. That age is already knocking at the door.

I can put this thing also on selfisn grounds. Did you ever read Sydney Smith's essay on the "Pleasures of Knowledge"? Then find and read it. The key to

contentment in the lonely life is study. Once we have cultivated a love for study we have friends everywhere, for books are everywhere. A priest who loves study is never lonesome, since his friends are on his shelves, as many of them as he wants, for we need little money to buy books. How cheap a price to pay for a contented life! Priests who do not study are often found running about seeking amusement and often become mild scandals to the people, who do not understand how educated men can find no pleasure except in play. We play for recreation and exercise. When we find our occupation in play we are on the down grade, spiritually and mentally. Turn to your books and you will find greater pleasure than play could offer you.

Make your love for study serve a definite end. Select something in which to excel. Our tradition of priestly learning was given us by priestly specialists. There are a thousand chances to specialize in these days. Of course you will be charged with cultivating a hobby. What of it? There are hobbies good and bad. Select a good one that calls for the use of good books to keep it alive and growing. Thousands of discoveries have been made through hobbies. Everyone who has a specialty has a hobby.

I need not tell you to raise your studies to the highest plane by making them serve God as well as yourself and your neighbor. You will have learned how to do that before you finish your special retreat for ordination. The whole retreat will aim at telling you to seek God in all things. Learning only for the sake of learning is not the desirable thing. Learning for the honor

and glory of God, that He may be better served by His creatures, is learning well done and well directed. Nature needs no men of science to tell her how to praise God. She does that in every wind that blows, every star that shines, every wave that breaks, every tree that tosses its green colors to greet the sun. Nature rather teaches the scientist, when he asks her to reveal her secrets. She tells him that he may, by knowing them, know better her God. Approach your studies with that thought in mind. Enter upon them humbly and gratefully. Your reward will be keener insight and clearer vision. Of all men, those whose wisdom comes through the study of true philosophy and Theology ought to make the greatest scientists, for they alone have the foundation without which no great scientific superstructure can be built.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

One of the best read Catholic.....

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

REGINA CLERI

My dear boy:

One of the best read Catholic writers of America was criticized because he made no reference to the Blessed Virgin in any of his published works. The excuse was offered that their subject matter did not call for such a reference. I could not offer the same excuse for these letters if I failed our Blessed Mother, who is so lovingly and appropriately called *Regina Cleri.* She has a place here, not only because she has a throne in the heart of every priest, but also because, in a very special way, priests are intimately related to her.

I need not urge you to have a great love for the Blessed Virgin. You have that already. You could not help having it, for you learned it at your earthly mother's knee. Perhaps you owe your vocation to it; indeed, I think you do. Then, too, it is in your very blood. The traditions of your race are all entwined with a love for Mary, a love that runs through them like a thread of gold; for that race is bound to Christ forever by the silken cord of its holy memories, made unbreakable by the strength of the precious golden strand. So I need not urge you to love the Blessed Virgin. While you keep her Divine Son in His place in your heart, she will always be at His right hand; and you are to be a priest at that Son's altar. But

would I be showing my love for her if I failed to give her one letter at least?

I said that the title, *Regina Cleri,* is an appropriate one. It is much more appropriate than perhaps you know. Spiritual writers have already called your attention to the fact that the Sacrifice of the Mass has in it a strong reminder of the Incarnation. I have already touched on this, though but lightly and in passing. Through Mary, the Son of God was given to humanity and "dwelt amongst us." Through the priest, He comes again in the tabernacle of His love. By similarity of mission, of act, and of calling, then, the Blessed Virgin is related to priests by a tie stronger even than the tie which binds them to their earthly mothers; as it certainly is higher and nobler and purer. She touched Christ on the manger-altar of Bethlehem before we touched Him on the altar of the Perpetual Sacrifice. He came to earth, by her consent and co-operation, to die on Calvary. He comes again at our word, as the Victim of the Unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law. Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, belongs, by a certain title akin to that of the sacerdotal, to the great body of the priests of the New Law.

You know so much of my ways and so many of my special interests, that you could not have failed to note a certain predilection for the study of ancient mythologies. I love to trace, through the darkness of paganism, the faint line of the Light of Truth that runs back in them all to the primitive revelations of God to man. Here I always find evidence to support my faith; for here I find truth indelibly written, not only on the

human heart, but also on the human intellect. I look back of the gods of wood and stone, back of the "mysteries" and "secrets" of the pagan priesthoods, to the revelation of the One True God. I learn the source of the Magi's great knowledge, and know the foundation of the learning of the Adepts; for I can see their hopes, the why and wherefore of their "unknown" and "hidden" gods. Behind the vulgar gods of India and China and Egypt, of the sacred rivers, bulls, crocodiles and birds, there are the great half-forgotten traditions of the ages; and behind these the Promise, and the truth of the Triune God. Faded and dim as is paganism's picture of Him, yet there it stands unmistakable.

But Mary, too, is there. We catch a glimpse of "The Woman" of the Promise, through whose seed the head of the serpent was to be crushed, in Demeter, trying by fire to make a man-child immortal. The serpent is her emblem because, the old pagans said, by shedding its skin it symbolizes a renewal of life. Was there a deeper meaning in that emblem? In Egypt we note the idea of purity in the lives of the priests of Isis, and again the serpent. We do not fail to see, too, Mary's sorrows prefigured in the grief of Isis over the loss of her son Horus. In the Bona Dea we again meet the emblem of the serpent and hark back to Eden and the Fall.

These are the vague pictures. Belouino gives us clearer ones: "Fo, the God of the Indians, to save the world, became incarnate in the womb of a young girl, fiancee of a sovereign. The Indians regarded her as the most pure and beautiful of women. The most

revered goddess of China conceived by the touch of a flower. Boudda owed his birth to a virgin named Maha-Mahai. The Brahmins said that, when a god became incarnate, he came down into the womb of a virgin by an operation of divine power. The Druids lived in expectation of this miracle."

Now, Paganism had always one face for the people and another for the priests. These latter gave "gods" to the vulgar, but kept for themselves "secrets of the truth," whose origins were lost in the dim past. Apis, the bull, was worshipped by the crowds. The priests gave him as a symbol of an Incarnation promised but not understood. Greece had her "Unknown God," while Egypt had the "Hidden One." Thousands of years of darkness were prolific in the making of gods and goddesses; but, in the highest conception, half-expressed and half-concealed by the priests, was the outline of the Eternal and the hope He gave to man in the Promise that foretold Christ and the Mother who would bear Him. Long before the Star shone for the Wise Men of the East, Bethlehem was already in the pagan Olympus. Corrupted as were the traditions of the Incarnation, we see in them the dignity given "The Woman" in ancient religious systems. Mary thus foreshadowed was a goddess. The heart and intellect of the human race enthroned one whose true place they did not understand. At least we, who know that true place, who understand that she was the holy one amongst ourselves who ushered our Redeemer into the world, should honor and love her as she deserves.

Even the pagans can teach us priests a lesson as to

the relationship that exists between the Blessed Virgin and the Christian priesthood. Be patient with me if I run for a few moments into speculation. Paganism filled its pantheons with gods made according to its lights. The highest of them symbolized in some form truths of the Primitive Revelation. But others deified ideas, virtues, passions, or reverences. Suppose Christianity had been left by its Founder to the buffetings of human passions, or to the tendency to error of depraved human nature. What would happen as the centuries rolled out from Calvary? That which happened before Calvary. The religion of Christ would be at the mercy of the winds of error that blow so strongly and freely from pride of intellect and corruption of heart. Without the constant miracle of Christ in His Church, long ago the message of Calvary would have been nothing more than a dim tradition guarded by a priesthood itself in darkness. We should have a world filled with new pagan systems; but in each would appear the memories of the Promise fulfilled, as the old systems had the memories of the Promise made. So, the new pagan systems would contain the tradition of the All-Redeeming Sacrifice, and a place for the priesthood commissioned to offer it. What would that place be? They would see that priesthood calling down God upon earth's altars and giving Him to men; as they would see Mary ,"The Woman" of Revelation, forming His Body of her own and giving Him to a waiting world. Out of these would surely arise the deification of both. A new paganism would mark the close relationship and elevate both to the altars. History might

be trusted again to repeat itself in this, were God's light withdrawn from men, and the deposit of His truth left unguarded. Men have changed only by grace. They are still prone to make strange gods and strange religious systems. What they once did with the old Revelation, they would do along equally logical lines with the new one. Mary and the Eternal Priesthood would be found together. The unaided intellect and heart of man would thus place them. In Mary would be deified maternity and virtue, giving earthly existence to Truth; in the Priesthood its continuance amongst men.

These speculations, well founded on the story of the past, I have made for but one purpose: to show you how closely such a mission as yours, naturally and logically, binds you to one with such a mission as that of the Blessed Mother. Mary and the priesthood are associated in the work of the Redemption, and even darkest error would do no more than misunderstand that association. But we have the light of truth. Our knowledge of ourselves, as human beings born under sin, raised up by baptism, and consecrated by ordination, leaves us fully conscious of our failings; but also fully conscious of our close relationship to the Mother of Our Leader, the High Priest of the New Law. No wonder Mary is pictured amongst the Apostles when the mighty wind came, and the tongues of fire brought the Holy Ghost upon them. She was there by right; and, I dare again to say it, by a right akin to the sacerdotal. No wonder she was at the foot of the Cross. She was there also by right; for her heart offered her Son in Sacrifice

to His Father. For her the Victim of Calvary was consumed by the burning fire of her undying and unequalled love. If we could only catch a spark from that fire, when we stand alone on the New Calvary to offer Him again, how great would be our love for Christ, and how tenderly would we recognize that Mary, the Mother, is also our *Regina Cleri.*

I am often moved to judge the attitude of our separated brethren to the Blessed Virgin with the kindness of understanding. Having rejected the idea of sacrifice as the highest form of religious worship, they naturally are jealous of what they have left, prayer. To them prayer is the highest act of worship. So God alone they believe should be the direct object of it. They close their eyes to the fact that sacrifice was always considered by men to be the worthiest act of homage to God. They fail to recognize the wonderful succession of the sacrifices of the Old Law as types of the Great Sacrifice to be offered everywhere. Priests who offer the Great Sacrifice that can have none but God as its object, should remember that they can offer it with cleaner hearts and greater love when they ask and receive a part of the fervor that was Mary's at the foot of the Cross.

There are certain dignitaries of the Church who, having the right to use pontificals, have also the personal privilege of a private chapel. But no priest need wait for dignity to give him the right to have a little private chapel that he can enter when he pleases—his pocket with a rosary in it. Get for yourself a private chapel of this kind and enter it often, if only for a

few moments; but make these few moments come many times a day. Thus you can be in your chapel, even when you are on the street. Your hands will soon learn to slip in and feel the familiar touch of the beads. You will have a refuge in affliction to comfort you and a haven of safety in danger. I cannot conceive of your ever being lonesome, no matter where you are sent, if you realize that you have your Mother with you always.

This Crown of the Rosary—for the Latins call it "Corona"—will be even more to you. If you use the rosary right you will meditate on the Mysteries as you say it. Then it will be a review of your theology for you. It is impossible to meditate for even a minute each day on these Mysteries without gaining new knowledge and inspiration from them. They are also a history of Christ and His Church. Think of the vast field of truth opened up in the Annunciation and continued in the four other Joyful Mysteries. Consider the treasury of Divine Charity from which to take riches in the Agony in the Garden and the Sorrowful Mysteries. You are ready to see again the miracle of God's love for all His creatures, and the spread of His mercies everywhere on earth, when the Resurrection group of truths flash before your spiritual vision. Your private chapel is not a bare one. It is decorated by the loving hand of the Church, with living pictures for the edification of your soul and the instruction of your heart and mind.

There are also noble and beautiful statues in your pocket chapel. Look at that magnificent one called Holy Obedience near the picture of the Annunciation.

Beside it is Divine Condescension. Next is the most wonderful of all representations of Humility; and neighbor to it is Fidelity. Appropriately the last of the group at the entrance of your chapel, stands Zeal. Along the left wall, and near the picture of the Agony, is the masterpiece of Suffering. That one near it, representing the Scourging, will remind you of Holy Purity by teaching the mortification of the flesh. The next is a rebuke to Pride. Its companion is Patience; and the last of the group is Self-Abnegation. Turn to the right wall and see, first the Triumph of Truth; second, its Glory; third, its Power. Next the last, the Reward of Virtue, and then its Coronation. On the altar is the Cross. Was ever a chapel so beautifully appointed with aids to devotion as the little pocket chapel that you may carry with you wherever you go?

Much as I charge you to love the Blessed Virgin, still more I urge you to remember that she will accept nothing that is not referred to her Divine Son. Heathenism made her a goddess and would do it again; but she is a creature. She leads us to Christ by giving us the example. She presents our prayers to him in hands made of human flesh like our own, but hands that never were sullied by sin as are ours. She smiles a human smile of welcome to the practice of virtues like unto hers. She dries tears like those she herself shed. To us she is understanding; and, because of that, she gives us confidence in spite of our weakness, and strength in spite of our misery. There is so much of human in the Blessed Virgin that she never lets us forget that she is one of us; but she is also so "full of

grace," in spite of the human, that she is truly for us a Mirror of Justice, a Seat of Wisdom, a Tower of Ivory and a House of Gold.

Who wrote the Litany of the Blessed Virgin? I do not know. But I do know that he who did was wise with the wisdom of the one who wrote the Imitation of Christ. Both veiled their faces and concealed their names. Both threw away earthly immortality for something greater; and I am selfishly glad they did. In the "Imitation" we feel that our Father Jesus Christ is speaking directly to our hearts. In the Litany we feel that we ourselves are gathering and binding together a sheaf of unmatched flowers, giving them into the hands of our Mother, to be laid in gratitude before the throne of her Son.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

A honey-bee has a coat of.....

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

ON THE PRIEST GENTLEMAN

My dear boy:

A honey-bee has a coat of beautiful colors and carries a bag filled with honey, but he ends in a sting. To you I have been a honey-bee in these letters, because in them I have diligently gathered honey from many flowers that I did not grow. I have worn the coat of beautiful colors when, from time to time, I complimented you on your present graces and the good prospect for your future that shows in them. Now I approach the end of my letters, as you are nearing the end of your preparation. There is a sting. I need not use it, but it is better that I should.

When you were home on your last vacation I noted a few crudities that I hope you will try to correct before you begin your life's work. In fact, I jotted down a list of them for your benefit, and now seize this opportunity to use them as a blessed sting. Flashing the colors once more, however, I add that I believe you will not be sorry.

One of the most frequent causes for reprimands in the Army is "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." I have known men even to have been dismissed when found guilty on that charge. The Army has standards and tries to uphold them. The Church is the Army of Christ. She, too, has standards. We

priests are officers of that Army. Is it too much to ask that we be also gentlemen?

What is a gentleman? I never found a better definition than that of Cardinal Newman, which is too long to quote in full; but it is all expressed in the opening words: "A gentleman never inflicts pain." Read the rest in his "Ideals of a University."

The Cardinal went to rock bottom. He emphasized the spiritual qualities while speaking of lesser worldly values. He made a portrait that will forever stand as a masterpiece. He did not put a Roman collar or a cassock on his gentleman; but we can do that, and the portrait loses nothing of the strength of its delineation or the idealism of its conception. Every priest might well have this noble word picture constantly before him on his desk. For you, I wish only to point out some of the details that, like a good artist, the Cardinal did not paint in, but certainly suggested. In doing that I must use the sting. They say that the stings of bees cure rheumatism. Perhaps my sting may prove kind enough to cure you of a few exterior faults that make you limp a little as an officer and a gentleman in the Army of Christ.

To begin: Have you any prejudice against shoe polish, or does the labor enforced by its daily use appear to be loss of time? Let me assure you that you are quite wrong in either case. Pay attention to personal appearance; keep your shoes shined and your clothes pressed on all occasions; take proper care of your teeth and finger nails. Besides, by so doing you will give them longer life, and practice an economy that may be useful.

Constant companionship with young men, and young men only, in the dining room, has had the bad effect of making you forget some of your table manners. You tried to be on your best behavior when you dined with me last summer, but you betrayed a lack of ease suggestive of unfamiliarity with the details of table etiquette. Do you remember the day when the rector of a Jesuit College came to visit me? You were at dinner with us, and entered vigorously into the discussions. You became very much interested in one particular question, and, encouraged to speak, gave your views very intelligently on it. The good father differed with you, but, bless your heart, he had no chance; not because he was wrong—as a matter of fact I am quite sure that he was right—but because you never let him finish anything he started to say. Enthusiasm in interesting disputations never excuses ungentlemanly interruptions. After dinner two sisters from the school came over to see me about some matter that the Superior considered important. We were sitting on the veranda and they had to pass us to enter the house. You did not stand up, nor did you even take the cigar out of your mouth—a compliment to my cigars that I should have been glad to dispense with. One day I saw you passing the rectory in a great hurry. A little lad from the school, recognizing the clergyman in you, tipped his hat. Did you return the salute? Not a bit of it. Perhaps you were too modest. But I was proud of that boy, while lamenting the modesty that did not reward his politeness and his deference for your sacred calling. I must confess that I was immensely pleased

when I presented you to the Bishop, who had come to the parish for Confirmation, and you addressed him as "Your Lordship"; but a lot of the pleasure was lost when I heard you refer to him later, while talking to a fellow-seminarian, as "His Nibs." Of course, it was a joke, and I like humor; but that particular brand is not the kind I like. Honestly, do you? By the way, there are three vacant spaces in my library awaiting the return of books borrowed by you last summer. I would not mind so much had I not seen the books that ought to be in these spaces at your father's house a few weeks ago. A gentleman expresses appreciation for the loan of books in two ways: by reading them, and by returning them when read. Again—but no, while the list is still unfinished I have stung enough to make a cure. It now remains with you to see that the symptoms are removed by co-operating with the physician, and taking your medicine faithfully—if not cheerfully.

A priest is an officer, and an officer ought to be a gentleman. The Church teaches us to be gentlemen, but, in America at least, many imagine that democracy permits departures from the canons of gentlemanly decorum. For example: On all official occasions the Church expects her clergy to take their proper places according to rank and seniority. I studied my theology in a French seminary. There, no student would dream of passing before a fellow-student who was even by an hour his senior. It was not hard to do that once we understood what was required of us, and the system is good. For a whole year I was at the end of the line; but there was a psychological satisfaction in looking

ahead to making progress even in seniority. It had a rather good effect on me in other ways. Even as priests it would do us good if we practised what the Church requires in this respect. It is a painful thing to feel age creeping upon us; but the trial is softened when even the small compensation of due deference is paid to it. Bishops are placed strictly according to seniority when they gather for any ecclesiastical function. It would be good for us to be as careful of the rules of seniority among ourselves. The best way to insure that is to begin in the seminaries. I was really edified, when I dined at the American College in Rome, to note that the rule of seniority is strictly observed in placing the students at table; almost as much pleased as I was when I noted how little curiosity was shown by these same students when I, a complete stranger, entered the refectory. Not one stared or even turned his head to look at me; though a priest from home must have been a welcome sight, and long absence on foreign soil a stimulant to inquisitiveness. These boys were curious about me, as I learned later when one of them became my assistant, yet they made no outward exhibition of it.

There is no barrier to a priest at the door of any Catholic home. He is always welcome to the family circle of rich or poor, high or low; and all receive him as one worthy of honor. Why disappoint them by a show of manners that call for apologies to their friends? True, St. Paul did say that we must be "all things to all men," but a gentleman is that. The poorest of our people find additional pleasure in the visit of

a priest who has good manners; and the richest can pick no flaw in his bearing or deportment. To be "all things to all men" in this matter of deportment, it is only necessary to get on the high plane of a gentleman and stay there.

There is also our position before the children to be considered. The priest is the very life of his school. That school has much to do with the training and education of the little ones of the flock. They are prone to imitate those they look up to. How expect politeness and gentleness of speech and action from them if we use slang when we address them, relax our dignity in their presence, or show boorishness in our gestures and actions? Think it over now, for life is before you.

There are little niceties that we can make instinctive in our bearing and conduct, if we train our souls by living spiritual lives. I think that, in general, the saints were the politest of Christians; because they began their heaven before they left the earth. It is quite possible to do that. One who knows in advance that within a short time he must move to another country, and live in the midst of another people than his own, can begin his new life by associating with such citizens of that country as he may meet before he leaves for it. We all know that we are destined by God to live in His Kingdom and to associate with His Elect. But a foretaste of that Kingdom is within us now if we really want to find it there. His angels are ever around us. We all make efforts to be correct in our deportment when we visit the great ones of earth. I know of one priest who tried so hard to rise to the occasion of his presenta-

tion to the late President Roosevelt that, in his embarrassment, he dropped on one knee to kiss a non-existent ring. But we have our Angel Guardians always with us, and little thought do we give to that fact. If we did, I think that there would be nothing to be desired in our general conduct, and the aforesaid niceties would become quite natural to us on all and every occasion. It is quite true that Christ scourged a lot of profaners from the Temple, and that He sat down with publicans and sinners; but it is also true that He resented the conduct of Simon the Pharisee, who forgot his politeness when He came to his home, not giving Him the kiss of peace, and failing to wash His tired feet.

It is sad to say that the real priest gentleman stands out, not because he is a rare exception, but because he is not of the majority. College and Seminary life throws us together, and circles for men only are not noted for producing gentlemen. Then, it is unfortunate that students often resent politeness in their associates. When I went to school it was the bully who ruled the playgrounds. His petty tyrannies soon drove all the gentlemanly instincts out of the rest of us. College was but little better. The Seminary did make a change, while still leaving much to be desired. The change was due to the spiritual lessons we learned there; of that I am convinced. The material the Seminary had to work on was the same; but the leaven of meditation and prayer helped shape it. It lost its heaviness before being placed in the oven of ordination, and behold we have rather promising bread.

I think that now I had better rub a little oil on the

wounds made by the sting. You are at heart a gentleman. I know that and appreciate the fact. You have little to correct in order to acquire all the exterior graces that go to prove it. Your outward defects are only skin deep, like exterior beauty. A little effort, a little attention to trifles, and you are rid of them. I sting now only because it might do no good to sting later. Unlike the honey-bee introduced at the beginning of this letter, I have not stung in anger, but in love.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH

Here I am in the.....

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH

ON CONVERSIONS

My dear Father:

Here I am in the middle of my annual retreat and thinking of my letters to you all the while that I am thinking of my own soul. I want to write one letter here as a spiritual exercise for both of us. In the natural course of events you have many more retreats before you than I, for I really cannot expect to make many more; but it is a consoling thought that I might be able, as my evening approaches, to say something to brighten your morning. Appropriately I am going to write, here in my half-solitude, the last of these letters. True I am anticipating, for I have still six others to fill in between, but you will not see this one until you have read all the rest. I want to write this while the spirit of the retreat is on me.

There is a difference between this letter and the others. Do you notice that I no longer address you as "My dear boy"? Before this reaches your hand you will have been ordained to the priesthood. No chance, however, will be given you to see it until your hands are anointed and have touched the chalice. You will receive it between the day of your ordination and that of your first Holy Mass. When you have read it I shall again have lapsed into silence, never to refer to these letters in your presence. They were written to my spiritual

son. He is replaced by my spiritual brother—God protect, guide and bless him!

Before I left home to come here I dropped in to see your mother. I told her I was going on retreat, and added: "Next year, please God, the boy will be out there on retreat with me."

"'Twill be a great change for him," she said; "a great change to be one of yourselves."

"Yes," I answered, "and a great change for you to be in the aristocratic society that you are going to join in a few months."

She smiled. "You were always a joker, Father William. The Altar Society is good enough for me. Do you think that I am going to join the Daughters of the Revolution or the Colonial Dames?"

"Oh, no indeed," I laughed, "you are going to join a much more aristocratic society than either of them; one that has for its permanent President the greatest woman ever born into this world."

"Now I know that you are joking, Father William," she protested; "for the greatest woman ever born into this world was the Blessed Virgin, and she is not in the world now."

"She's near enough to it to be the President of the Society of Priests' Mothers that you are going to join at Christmas," I said triumphantly.

You should have seen her face then. I cannot attempt to describe it. Such happiness never shows in smiles. It shines out of the eyes. She did not speak for a moment or two, and then she said: "Do you know, Father William, that for this last eight months

I have been living in a state of wonderment? I cannot understand why God has done so much for me. I know I never deserved it."

"That," I said, "is probably the reason why He did it, because you knew that you did not deserve it. It is humility that gets us the proudest gifts and favors of Heaven."

I left her happy; and I am telling you about the incident to make you even happier than you are on the day of your ordination. You will need it as a bracer too when, after the glory of your first week as a priest you will have come down from the clouds, touch feet to the earth, and begun to realize that it is right here that you must do your work.

The world is before you. Here and there it shows garden spots, but they are few enough, and even the best of them are growing the poison weeds of sin. Your special labor is to be done in one of the garden spots; but, as I already told you, each effort that you make must be with an eye to the work everywhere. Your survey will show you that the Gospel of Christ has yet to reach millions; that the world is full of those who once had it but later lost it in whole or in part. What can you do to bring back all these lost sheep? What is to be the extent of your power for good? Without hesitation I answer that you "Can do all things in Him that strengtheneth" you. Fix that fact firmly in your mind—*all things.* Your power is limited only by the limitations of the grace God is willing to give you, and He is willing to give all that you ask for, and all that you are ready and willing to use.

I need not tell you to work hard for the flock that is to be your special care, the faithful ones within your part of the fold. You will do that without advice from me. But if you can do all things in Him Who gives the grace, then what of the flock without? To speak plainly, are you going to follow the old line of least resistance and confine your labor to what the interest of the few demands? If you are, then the message of the Good Shepherd does not reach you. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and there shall be One Fold and One Shepherd." But, I hear you say: I cannot neglect what is especially assigned to me for other work. I do not say that you should, but I do call your attention to the fact that our Great High Priest said that the Good Shepherd left the ninety-nine in the desert and went out after the one that had strayed away.

I have no hints to give you as to how you might be an apostle to the lost as well as to the faithful. God will attend to that if you are in earnest and if you ask for His inspirations. This I know: that by His grace you can do whatever you set your mind and heart on doing, no matter what it is. If you want to be a convert-maker, you can make converts. If you think it is not your business to do that, you will make no converts. Good comes out of your labor in proportion to the love you put into it. The fold itself is well-guarded, but it is not welcoming the other sheep in consoling numbers because we are not going out enough to seek them.

It may be objected, as it has been objected, that the work of conversions to the Faith is now more difficult

than ever before. That I deny. What is the basis for such a statement? "The corruption of the day and age," says someone. I answer that the day and age of the Apostles was a thousand times more corrupt, yet it was the most glorious period of conversions in the history of the Church. "The terrible opposition of the hour," says another. I answer that the advance of the Church then was made through rivers of martyr blood. "The intellectual opposition of the times," says a third. I answer that the Church is the Mother of learning. We have the remedy for all ills. We have the foundation for building. We have consolations for all sorrows. We have power to disarm both sin and death. We have the healing and vivifying Gospel. What is wrong, that we make so little headway against error? Where are our converts? Where is the advance God wants us to make for Him? Unless thousands of young priests ask themselves these questions we are going to be a lot of unprofitable servants. St. Paul asked only a hearing. Are we asking even that much of the erring world around us? Compare our zeal with that of the saints, and know the truth. We do not progress because we do not try. That is the plain, though unpleasant, fact. Yet we know that in Him and by Him we can do all things. He has said so, and He is Truth itself.

I am not going into any rhapsodies over the great dignity of the office you have received. All of them you have heard already. I am only going to ask you to consider the charge that was put on you as the chasuble fell down over your shoulders. You belong now to God

in an especial way, but God will deem you an unprofitable servant if you try to serve Him while ignoring any of His children. You cannot do that and serve Him well. The only witnesses whose testimony in your favor will be admitted on the day of your particular judgment will be the souls you have saved from everlasting death. There is only one way to the Kingdom for you, a priest of God, and that way must be blazed chiefly by the souls for whose labor you have been responsible. If you were ordained for a comtemplative order, you would gain such souls through prayers and austerities. If you were ordained for a teaching order, you would gain them by work in the schools. If you were ordained for an order of hospitalers, you would gain them at the bedside of affliction. But you were ordained for none of these. You are of the order that Christ founded. You must win the witnesses for your cause by prayer and sacrifice, by teaching in season and out of season, by deeds of mercy and of love; but also by labor, in the fold and out of it. If you can win by persuasion, then you must be insistent in persuading; if by example, even so must you give it; if by martyrdom, you must turn to martyrdom. But what Christ wants are souls. He has chosen you to get them for Him. You can get them if you work to get them. You will take out of your priesthood just what you put into it, plus the increase that God is ready to give with lavish hand.

We are not without material to work on, and good material at that. Our people are an educated people. Practically all can be reached by the printed word. They

support magazines and reviews and read them. A few weeks ago I saw a railroad baggage man lying full length on a truck, his head propped up on a valise, with a copy of the "Atlantic Monthly" for company. We seldom seem to think effectively of reaching such people. Are we too busy, or is it a case of not knowing how? It is true that prejudice is a barrier, but what are we doing to break down that barrier? It is certain that God wants His message to reach every soul. Therefore He will give us the means of reaching them. Are we even asking to be enlightened as to ways and means?

During my retreat the preacher, Father Stritch, S.J., told of an incident that happened a year before, during a similar retreat he was preaching to the clergy of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. One day the Archbishop was called from the exercises to the sick-bed of a dying pastor. He returned visibly affected, and thus told to the retreat master what had happened:

"When I sat by the side of the dying man," he said, "I knew that there was no hope for his recovery. He seemed cast down, so I said to him: 'Father, are you afraid to meet God?'

"The good priest looked at his Archbishop with a steady gaze and answered: 'No, Your Grace, I am not afraid. I have confidence in His mercy and charity. No, I am not afraid to meet Him. But—' and here his eyes filled with tears—'I have another feeling that makes me sad. Oh, Your Grace, I have no fear, but I am ashamed.'

" 'Why ashamed, Father?'

" 'Ashamed because I have so little to offer Him for

such a long life in His service.'

"'Then be consoled, Father,' said the Archbishop, 'for you have been one of the hardest working and most successful of priests.'

"But the tears of the dying man continued to flow. 'I thank Your Grace for that; but it is I myself who know best the opportunities I have missed. I am ashamed because I did not do more.'"

My dear boy—no, my dear Father—I have meditated much on that story. I have been in anticipation on my own death-bed more than once since I heard it, and each time I have been more and more ashamed. I cannot, somehow, get that death-bed scene out of my thoughts. I do not think that I want to forget it. I am sure it will stay with me through the rest of my life. Whenever I am tempted to leave undone a duty that I could do, I shall hear my dying brother's voice. All my retreat might have been contained in that priest's last sigh. Indeed, perhaps he preached the most effective sermon of his life in nine words.

Your old pastor wishes you long and happy years of service. He wishes you success and blessings. He hopes that, through you, God's cause is to make many gains, that many souls will be the reward of your zeal and devotion. He wishes you, in a word, full and flowing over, of the best a faithful priestly life can give, and receive. But should all his good wishes come true for you, he yet knows that, even with your abundance of holy spoils for God, yes, and even because of them, your eyes will fill at the end, and your heart will say: "No, I am not afraid, but, O God, I am ashamed."

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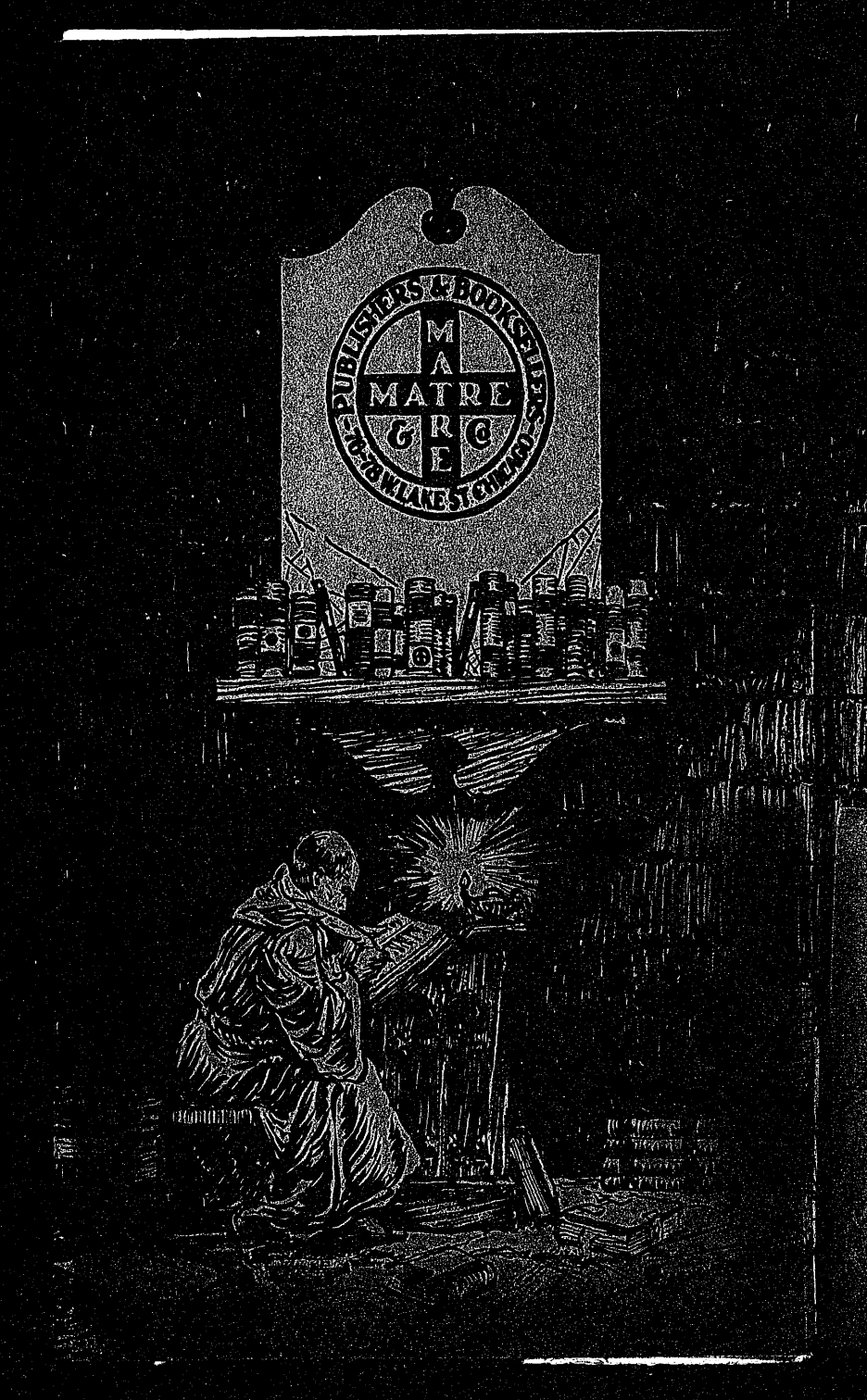
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